# Yajur Veda

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## Overview of Veda

In the Hindu tradition, Veda is a single collection of all mantras. It consists of mantras which are of three types namely *rk,* the mantra of illumination in one of several metres, the *saman,* a mantra with a metre which has to be sung according to the symbols indicated in the mantra and the remaining *yajus* mantra which is in rhythmic prose. When Veda is said to be threefold (*trayi*) the reference is to these three types. According to the tradition, Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa compiled four collections of mantras with the names Rig Veda Mantra Samhita (RVS), Yajur Veda Mantra Samhita, Sama Veda Mantra Samhita and the Atharva Veda Mantra Samhita from the original single collection. These four collections are mentioned by name and function in several Veda mantras such as Shukla Yajur Veda (31.9), Atharva Veda (10.7.20) etc. As the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad declares (2.4.10), all these four collections of mantras are the oral revelations of the Supreme Being to the *rishis.*

In the Hindu tradition these books are regarded as the source of all wisdom, interpreted in a broad sense. These books contain the seed of the doctrine or the philosophical thought which blossomed into the teaching of the Upanishads and Vedanta; they also contain the seed of the later practices and procedures for self- realisation and actualisation and the disciplines of Yoga with its numerous branches. This view of the content of the Veda mantras is not merely our opinion; it is stated in several mantras of the Veda. For instance Shukla Yajur Veda (36.1) states:

***rcham vacham prapadye***

***mano yajuh prapadye***

***sama pranam prapadye***

***chakshuh shrotram prapadye***

The Rig Veda mantras propound all the speech or all the ideas and thoughts leading to all-sided perfection; the Yajur Veda develops the mind which is the source of all actions; the Sama Veda makes us fully develop our life energies or *prana* for completely developing our potential. The Atharva Veda gives the methods of perfection of our body and senses like eyes (*chakshu*) or hearing.
Yajur Veda has two major recensions namely the Krishna (mixed) Yajur Veda (KYV) and the Shukla (pure) Yajur Veda (SYV). Taittiriya Samhita is one of the recensions of KYV with many adherents in South India and Southern Maharashtra.

The focus of this book is to translate the mantras of Krishna Yajur Veda (KYV) Taittiriya Samhita (TS). Our aim is to understand and to unravel the multitude of

spiritual and psychological insights in it. In this task we view all Veda as one book; we want to understand KYV TS in the light of the spiritual insights of the Rig Veda Samhita unravelled by Sri Aurobindo and Sri Kapali Sastry. In turn, we want to explore the light KYV TS throws on the Rig Veda Samhita.

Thus the starting point for us are the writings on the Veda by Sri Aurobindo entitled “Secret of the Veda'' and his translations of Rig Vedic hymns entitled “Hymns to the Mystic Fire''. His disciple Sri Kapali Sastry's Samskrt commentary (*bhashya*) on the Rig Veda and his writings and translations in English on the Veda are also very important for our study. It is appropriate to remember that the first person in the last two thousand years to focus on the Veda as a spiritual document is Sri Madhvacharya known also as Sri Anandatirtha. An excellent introduction to the spiritual interpretation of the Veda is the essay by Professor S.K. Ramachandra Rao [R8].

It is undoubtedly true that the Veda deals with yajna or sacrifice, but with the inner yajna (*antar yajna*); the outer rite is only a physical framework for those who cannot do the inner yajna. To quote Sri Aurobindo “The elements of the outer sacrifice in the Veda are used as symbols of the inner sacrifice and self-offering; we give what we are and what we have in order that the riches of the Divine Truth and Light may descend into our life and become the elements of our inner birth into the Truth,--a right thinking, a right understanding, a right action must develop in us which is the thinking, impulsion and action of that higher Truth, *rtasya presha, rtasya dhitih* (RV 1.68.3) and by this we must build up ourselves in that Truth. Our sacrifice is a journey, a pilgrimage and a battle, a travel towards the Gods and we also make that journey with Agni, the inner Flame as our path finder (*pathikrt,* RV 2.23.6 and others) and leader.'' [HMF, p. 18]. Note that a common word for yajna is *adhvara,* whose two components *adhva* (path) and *ra* (movement) indicate that its meaning is journey.

Sri Aurobindo adds, “as the doctrine of the Rig Veda is the seed of the teaching of the Vedanta, so is its inner practice and discipline is a seed of the later practice and discipline of Yoga'' (*ibid*). KYV TS gives ample clues to the control of *prana* called later as the science of *pranayama.* For instance consider the mantra in TS (1.7.9):

***ayur yajnena kalpatam***

***prano yajnena kalpatam***

***apano yajnena kalpatam***

***vyano yajnena kalpatam***

***...***

**...**

***mano yajnena kalpatam***

***yajno yajnena kalpatam***

At this point we have to face certain realities. Almost all orthodox pundits and the lay persons associated with KYV TS are admirers and staunch followers of the great teacher Sayana and his ritualistic commentary (*bhashya*) on KYV TS. The commentary of Sayana is magnificent and voluminous; it gives the minute details for the performance of the rites. Sayana declares in his introduction that the aim of the Veda, specifically KYV TS, is to help a person realise his material desires and ward off unwelcome things (*ishta prapti anishta parihara*) by means of rituals. Sayana's commentary views KYV TS as a book of elaborate outward rites, yajna, performed with extensive recitation of mantras and the offering into the fire in the fire-altar of soma juice, ghee, rice etc; sometimes the organs of an animal killed nearby are also offered.

The compartmentalisation in the Hindu tradition is so strong that the orthodox adherents of the two Vedas, Rig Veda Samhita and Yajur Veda Samhita, firmly believe that there is very little overlap between these two books. TS has both *rk* and *yajur* mantras. Most (not all) *rk* mantras are in the Rig Veda Samhita. Roughly one third of all lines of mantras in KYV TS are from RVS. This is one well-kept secret in vedic books not mentioned by anyone.

KYV deals primarily with Agni; many of the Agni mantras in KYV which are also in Rig Veda Samhita have been translated into English by Sri Aurobindo.

Thus a significant component of the mantras of KYV have already been translated or commented either by Sri Aurobindo or Kapali Sastry making their spiritual and psychological insights of the Veda valid for KYV also.

The part I of the book has several essays detailing the Inner Yajna and the questions raised by critics or others. The first question raised by ritualists is, "Is there support for the thesis of Inner Yajna from the Brahmana books which are the authorities for the ritualists?'' The answer is yes, and the relevant quotes are given in the chapter 9 of part I.

Next for the followers of Vedanta, Upanishads are the authorities. We give the quotations from Chhandogya Upanishad (the entire adhyaya 17 of chap. 3), the entire anuvaka 80 of the Mahanarayana Upanishad which is the last chapter of Taittiriya Aranyaka, and the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad. We also give a detailed table of concordance between the outer yajna and inner yajna.

We also discuss the question of animal sacrifice and the legend of the bifurcation of Yajur Veda into Shukla Yajur Veda (SYV) and Krishna Yajur Veda (KYV). Every anuvaka of KYV TS is given a ritualistic title; animal sacrifice is indicated by the titles assigned to some anuvakas of TS (1.3) (kanda 1, *prapathaka* 3) such as "animal killing'', "offering of *vapa* or diaphragm into the fire'', "offering of intestines into the fire''.

The examination of every word in this *prapathaka* TS (1.3) indicates that the text has nothing to do with immolation. The commentator Sayana assigns arbitrary meanings to the words and phrases and creates the impression that the text of KYV itself supports the animal immolation. In the inner yajna, these mantras have a straight forward explanation. The performer focuses his attention on every one of his organs, like the diaphragm (*vapa*) or heart separately, and symbolically presents them to the cosmic powers in a meditative mood and prays that they may be purified and perfected. Such practices are done routinely in modern day sports-medicine clinics where healing is done by non-invasive meditative methods. The text itself mentions the role of *prana,* life-energy, repeatedly; this knowledge is prior to the information in ancient *hatha yoga* books like Gheranda Samhita by a thousand years at least. Still both the ritualists and Vedantins have ignored the wealth of knowledge here.

## Overview of Yajur Veda

“The Veda was the beginning of our spiritual knowledge; the Veda will remain its end. These compositions of an unknown antiquity are as many breasts of the eternal Mother of knowledge from which our succeeding ages have all been fed....'' (Sri Aurobindo [R12])

These books, in Vedic Samskrt, were preserved orally for a long time before they were written down in manuscripts about two thousand years ago or earlier. The core of the collection is the set of four Mantra Samhita books, namely Rig Veda Mantra Samhita, Yajur Veda Mantra Samhita, Sama Veda Mantra Samhita and the Atharva Veda Mantra Samhita, each type having one or more recensions. These are all poems, some metrical, others nonmetrical made up of rhythmic phrases. These books contain mantra or mantric verses which are the inspired words (*shruti*) heard by sages when they were in a superconscient state as a result of their askesis (*tapas*). Veda is not manmade in the sense it is not born of human intellect, human imagination or speculation. The mantras are the perceptions of deep spiritual truths and occult phenomena revealed to these seers.

An overview of the four Vedas, their recensions, the associated books like Brahmana, Upanishad etc., can be found in the chapter 1 of the book [C4].

These four Veda Samhita books have major overlaps. The entire text of Sama Veda Samhita is contained in the Rig Veda Samhita. There is an overlap of at least 25 percent between the Yajur Veda Samhita and Rig Veda Samhita, similarly for Atharva Veda. We give the *mandala-sukta-mantra* number of every mantra of the Rig Veda appearing here.

Every mantra or (mantra verse) in the Veda is of one of three types, namely *rik* or *rk, yajus* and *sama.* A *rk* mantra is metrical, i.e., it obeys one of a hundred well-defined metres. *rk* literally means a verse of illumination. A mantra which is sung in an elaborate manner according to specific rules is a *sama* mantra. A *yajus* mantra is a rhythmic prose passage not in any fixed metre.

Rig Veda Samhita and Atharva Veda Samhita have only *rk* mantras. The Sama Veda Samhita has only *sama* mantras; but the Yajur Veda Mantra Samhita has both *rk* and *yajur* mantras; many, but not all, of the *rk* mantras of Yajur Veda are in Rig Veda Samhita also.

In the Hindu tradition, Veda is viewed as a single collection of mantras. However followers of each of the three Vedas claim that their Veda is superior to the other two. The commentator Sayana declares that “Yajur Veda is more basic than the other two, it is like a canvas on which the Rik and Sama are painted''. But the Taittiriya Samhita of KYV to which he belonged does not support him; TS

(6.5.10) declares, “whatever is achieved in the sacrifice by Yajus and Saman is slack (*shithilam*); what is done by the Rik is firm and strong''. Similarly some hold that the same mantra appearing in two Samhitas like Rig Veda and Yajur Veda have supposedly different meanings. We do not subscribe to such sectarian views.

In this book we insist on the unitary nature of all the mantras of all the four Vedas. The complimentary nature of the Rig Veda and Yajur Veda is brought out in this book.

Yajur Veda Samhita has two broad types of recensions called as Krishna (mixed) Yajur Veda (KYV) Samhita and the Shukla (pure) Yajur Veda (SYV) Samhita. We will clarify the words "mixed', and "pure' later. Taittiriya Samhita is one of the recensions of the Krishna Yajur Veda Samhita, along with Maitrayani Samhita, Kapishthala Samhita and Kathaka Samhita. The Shukla Yajur Veda Samhita has two recensions namely Vajasaneyi Madhyandina and Vajasaneyi Kanva. There is heavy overlap between the KYV books like Taittiriya and SYV books like the Vajasaneyi.

A key concept in Veda is yajna. It is the collaboration between the Cosmic powers, also called Gods, and humans. The Gods want to divinise the humans and take them to higher and higher levels of perfection provided humans aspire to be perfect; human should express his thanks to the cosmic powers and express his adoration. Basically this yajna is a series of actions occurring in our subtle body specifying our ascent to the higher planes of consciousness and the corresponding levels of perfection. We call it inner yajna. Yajur Veda mantras, both rk and yajus, are chanted and used in carrying out this inner yajna. There is no human priest involved. The Cosmic power who helps us in these actions is called *adhvaryu,* one who travels *ra* in the path *adhva.*

## Outer yajna

However, the performance of the inner yajna was limited to a few persons such as the seers or *rishis* and their disciples. All persons do not either have the interest or inner-concentration needed. Moreover, the sages realised that the Veda may fade from the minds of the people if enough persons did not take interest in the Veda. Hence the sages recognised the need to develop new methods for making the Veda accessible to all persons, men and women regardless of status. Hence the outward yajna made up of a series of outward rites of varying complexity started. Later the word yajna meant the outward rite only. The yajna became a joyous community festival. All persons heard the melodious chants of the priests and witnessed the outward rites involving the

offering of ghee and various articles into the fire in the sacred altar accompanied with the mantra chants. People at large felt that the participation in these yajna conferred on them material well-being in the form of wealth, children, long-life, free of sickness.

It is a fundamental mistake to say that the Yajur Veda is a handbook of *adhvaryu* priest who controls the performance of the rite. The mantras in the Yajur Veda Samhita give only the mantras which have to be chanted or utilised on various occasions. It does not give the details of the rite. The actual details are in the books called Brahmana, the sutra books like the *apastamba.* Each Veda Samhita has one or more Brahmana books associated with it. Aitareya Brahmana is associated with Rig Veda, Taittiriya Brahmana is associated with Krishna Yajur Veda, Shatapatha Brahmana with Shukla Yajur Veda, etc.

The passages from the Brahmana books are called *brahmana* passages. They are in the form of long prose sentences without punctuation. Each passage can be (i) an explanation of a particular mantra in the Mantra Samhita book from a ritualistic point of view; or (ii) the legends about Gods and kings prevalent at that time; or (iii) the details of the rite, details of the offerings to the priests (*dakshina*) and the offering or oblation to the Gods; or (iv) the material benefits that accrue to the yajamana by the performance of the rite.

One of the peculiarities of the Mantra Samhita of Krishna Yajur Veda such as Taittiriya Samhita or Maitrayani Samhita is that some of the *anuvakas* contain *brahmana* passages of plain prose. It is one of the reasons for these Veda Samhita for being called *krshna* or mixed (i.e., mixed with *brahmana*). The Shukla Yajur Veda Samhita does not contain any *brahmana* passage.

Attempts were made to separate the mantra from the *brahmana* passages with the final aim of completely separating the mantra from the *brahmana* passages done (perhaps later) in Rig Veda, Sama Veda and Shukla Yajur Veda. Hence all the relevant *brahmana* passages related to the mantras of kanda 1 were placed in kanda 6. Similarly all the *brahmana* passages which explain mantras of kanda 4 are in kanda 5.

## Tittiri - Symbol of Legend

A name in the Vedic tradition is not merely an identifier; it reveals the contents and power of the object or entity it denotes. This statement is especially true for names of Vedas and Upanishads. There is an understandable curiosity about the meaning of the word *taittiriya* which indicates something connected with *tittiri.* Clearly there was a *rishi* with the name Tittiri who was a disciple of Vaishampayana. But what is *tittiri?* Rendering sacred words in Veda such as *hamsa* as a goose, *paramahamsa* as the supreme goose and *tittiri* as a partridge may satisfy the sadistic pedantry of some scholars. Persons who revere the Veda must seek the deeper (*paroksha*) meaning of the words while studying the texts.

To understand the meaning of the words in Veda, we have to seek the Veda itself, not secondary sources like *purana.* The word *tittiri* is mentioned along with a legend in TS (2.5.1), whose text and translation appear in the Part III of this book. The word also occurs in RV (1.36.7). A paraphrase of the legend in TS (2.5.1) is as follows: Tvashtr is the divine architect who creates a variety of forms both according to RV and TS (2.6.10). His son or creation, *Vishwarupa,* the All-form had three heads; with one head he imbibed Soma, the delight of existence; with the second he drank *sura,* the liquor; and with the third head he ate food (*anna*). Indra realising the dangers of *Vishwarupa* becoming all-powerful separated the three heads. The head, which imbibed Soma, became *kapinjala;* that which drank *sura* became *kalavingka;* and that which ate food became *tittiri.* The text mentions only these names and does not specify that they are birds.

*Kapinjala* means rays of spiritual Sun, (*ka:* who, *pin:* drinks, *jala:* waters); it is synonym of the *chataka* bird which drinks the waters coming directly from the sky before it touches the earth. *Kalavingka* means one who destroys (*la*) the knowings (*vingka*).

To understand *tittiri,* note that it occurs in RV (1.36.7) as *titir-vamsa.* Sri Kapali Sastry in his Rig Veda Bhashya translates it as “that which overcomes the foes (such as ignorance).'' He gives the Paninian derivation:

***tarate tiraterva liti kvasuh, anyat sarvam chandasam.***

The symbolism behind the legend is easy to understand. The three heads correspond to the three types of beings namely gods or *devah,* demons like Vrtra and finally humans. The Gods made of Light enjoy the Delight or Soma; the demons like liquor; humans depend on food. Indra the lord of Divine Mind foresees that if this All-form (*vishwarupa*) should become all-powerful, the demonic head would become all powerful. Hence he separates the three heads even in their formative stages. The form which came from the gods merged or

became the rays of spiritual Sun (*kapinjala*); the demonic form rejoined the forces of ignorance which hide the knowledge and energies from the humans.

Recall that *tittiri* is said to come from the head which eats *anna,* i.e., it represents human beings. Thus *tittiri* symbolises the forces or beings which help human beings in getting the knowledge which overcomes the psychological foes such as ignorance and falsehood. This title gives an excellent clue to the contents of TS.

Another important contribution of the legend quoted above is that it makes a clear distinction between the intoxicating liquid (*sura*) and the non-physical delight of existence (*soma*). Even if we interpret Soma as a creeper, there is no mention of the intoxication properties of all the 24 varieties of Soma creeper according to classical Ayurvedic texts like Charaka Samhita. RV (10.85.3) states clearly that no one can drink that which the wise call Soma.

Let us understand the titles of the other recensions of Yajur Veda. *Kapishthala* means that whose source is in the Spiritual Sun. *Maitrayani* is the vehicle (*ayani*) for attaining harmony and friendship. *Vajasaneya* (VS), a recension of Shukla Yajur Veda, means the conquering (*sana*) of the opulence or plenitude (*vaja*).

The *brahmana, aranyaka* and Upanishad of the Rig Veda, Aitareya, is derived from *itara* which means progressing from here (*ita* means here) to the superior psychological planes (*ra* means movement).

# Shukla Yajur Veda

## Overview of Shukla Yajur Veda

We have mentioned earlier that Yajur Veda Samhita has two major recensions, the Krishna Yajur Veda (KYV) and the Shukla Yajur Veda (SYV). KYV is the older one.

Traditionally the SYV is called Shukla (pure or unmixed) because it is not mixed up with the *brahmana* passages as in the KYV.

SYV in its *madhyandina vajasaneyi* (VS) version has about 2000 mantras divided into 40 chapters or *adhyayas,* the last *adhyaya* being the famous Ishavasya Upanishad. Note that about 1000 mantras (about one half) is in KYV TS also.

There is one major noticeable difference in the texts. In SYV, each chapter does not have a separate title.

However in KYV (TS), it is not the case. Recall that KYV has 7 Kandas, each divided into several prapathakas which are further divided into anuvaka. There are 651 anuvakas, some of which are brahmana passages. In KYV (TS), each anuvaka is assigned with a title based on its ritualistic interpretation or its use in the rite. The title may have very little to do with the meaning of the text of the anuvaka. We will discuss this matter later. Our contention is that KYV is called Krishna or mixed because of its complete identification with rituals, especially with animal sacrifices.

Two ancient Purana books, Vishnu Purana and Srimad Bhagavatam, relate the legend of the origination of the Shukla Yajur Veda; the relevant verses are quoted in [V2]. The text of SYV was revealed to the seer Yajnavalkya (Y). We give here a paraphrase of the legend. Y was a student of the famous teacher of Yajur Veda by name Vaishampayana (V) who was attached to rituals and to animal sacrifices. There was a disagreement between the teacher V and the student Y; consequently Y was asked to return the knowledge obtained and leave the place. Y did so. Later he carried out intense spiritual practices and prayed to the spiritual Sun to reveal the Yajur Veda which was *ayatayamam,* i.e., not polluted and not insipid. He was revealed the Shukla Yajur Veda which was *ayatayamam.*

When Y left V, he literally spat out or quickly recited in a hurry the Vedic knowledge he had learnt from V; “the disciples of V took the form of *tittiri* birds and picked up the relevant verses.'' Clearly the sentence in quotes is symbolic. Recall the deeper meaning of *tittiri* as our inner being which aspires to knowledge and overcomes the psychological foes. Thus the sentence states that the inner beings of the disciples recorded in their minds the verses relevant for

them. The collection of the verses obtained by the disciples is the Taittiriya Samhita of the Krishna Yajur Veda.

The main objection of Y against the knowledge received from V was that this knowledge completely identified the sacred *yajus* mantra text with the outward rituals. A mantra has several interpretations, one of which is the outward rite. But insistence that *yajus* meant only outer yajna was not acceptable to Y.

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## Aditi or Eternal Order

Aditi in the Veda represents the concept of wholeness (*purnatva*). Here she is represented as the Queen of the Eternal Order. Recall that in RV (1.89.10), she is described as "All that is born and what is to be born".

The Mighty Mother of those whose sway is just,

Queen of Eternal Order (*rta*), we call for help,

Aditi, the great Ruler, undecaying,

Far-expanding, good Protectress, gracious Guide. SYV (21.5)

## Arithmetic and Numbers

In all the four Veda Samhitas there are several hymns dealing with numbers. The decimal system for positive integers had become popular even in those days.

### Rigveda Samhita

The names for the numbers one to nine found in Rigveda are *eka, dve, tri, chatur, pancha, shat, sapta, asta, nava.* The names for ten, twenty,......, ninety occur in RV (2.18.5-6). The intermediate numbers have appropriate names. For instance ninety-four is termed four plus ninety. Nineteen is expressed one less than twenty etc. RV (3.9.9) has number 3339 spelled as three thousand, three hundred and thirty nine. Rigveda has more than a hundred references to numbers.

### Yajurveda Samhita

The Shukla Yajurveda (17.2) [Chapter 17, mantra 2] mentions numbers in ascending powers of ten, including ten thousand, *ayuta*; hundred thousand, *niyuta*; million, *payuta*; ten million, *arbuda*; hundred million, *nyarbuda*; billion, *samudra*; ten billion, *madhya*; hundred billion, *anta*; thousand billion, *parardha*. Similar list in Krishna Yajurveda (4.4.11).

It is not out of place to remark that the highest number known ancient greeks is ten thousand.

We give below the listing of the ten *anuvakas* in Book or *kanda* 7, *prapathaka* 2 i.e., (7.2) in Krishna Yajurveda.

(7.2.11): numbers in sequence

(7.2.12): odd (or uneven) numbers

(7.2.13): even numbers

(7.2.14): numbers 3,5,etc.,

(7.2.15): numbers 4,8,...etc.,

(7.2.16): numbers 5,10,...etc.,

(7.2.17): numbers 10,20,...etc.,

(7.2.18): numbers 20,40,...etc.,

(7.2.19): numbers 50,100,...etc.,

(7.2.20): numbers 100,1000,...upto ten raised to the power of eleven.

## Atharva Veda Samhita

The hymns (6.25.1, 6.25.2 and 6.25.3) and (7.4.1) specially emphasise the common relationship between one and ten, three and thirty, five and fifty, nine and ninety, clearly indicating that these persons had a good grasp of the basics of decimal system for positive integers.

## Blessings on all Aspects

In this chapter SYV (39) the sage invokes blessings on all aspects of nature, divinities and life, not excluding death and sorrow.

Blessed (*svaha*) be the effort (*ayasa*), blessed the strenuous effort (*prayasa*),

blessed be the collective endeavour (*samyasa*)

blessed the individual endeavour (*viyasa*)

blessed be the enterprise (*svahodyasa*)

A blessing on grief (*shuche*), a blessing on grieving (*shochali*);

blessing on sorrowing, a blessing on sorrow (*shoka*).

A blessing for the yama

a blessing for the Ender (*antaka*)

a blessing for death......

a blessing on the heaven and earth.

## Children of Immortality

Verse 5 given below states that all of us are the children of immortality and not sinners. This verse is repeated in Upanishads like Shvetashvatara.

The verse is also in RV (10.13.1).

"I yoke with my homage your ancient inspiration,

may the praise-songs come, as on the prince's pathway.

Listen, all ye sons of immortality,

you who inherit the celestial religions." SYV (11.5)

## Division of Society according to ability or vocation, Varna

The verse 22 in this hymn deals with the division of people into groups based on different vocations like rulers, *rajanya*, scholars and advisers *brahmana,* the expert with the arrow etc; The division is based on the principle *varna*, which is derived from *vrn*, to describe. The division of society, popularly called as caste, was based on *varna,* i.e., according to their occupation, and not according to the color as certain orientalists have thought. Many of the *brahmins* of south India are of a very dark complexion. RV (1.113.6) and RV (8.35.16-18) specifically deals with the four-fold division.

The verse 18.48 quoted prays on behalf of all the four groups for their enlightenment.

By your light, *(rucha),* give Light or Knowledge to us Brahmins;

give Light to the kings;

give Light to the Vaishya and Light to the Shudra;

give me also the Light or Knowledge. SYV (18.48)

*Rucham:* Light or Knowledge.

May *brahmanas,* possessing the lustre of spiritual knowledge be born,

and may there be born in this State

the man capable of ruling the people (*rajanya*),

the hero, expert with the arrow, an excellent marksman, and a great warrior;

And may there be cows giving plentiful milk,

the good draught-bull, and the swift horse.

May there be the woman at home with husband and children.

May there be born to the worshipper

heroic youths with the will to victory, the best

of chariot-fighters, fit to shine in assemblies.

May *parjanya* shower rains according to our needs;

may our trees, bearing fruit, ripen,

may our exertion and rest prosper. (22.22)

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## Isha Upanishad

The last chapter (40th chapter) of the SYV is same as the Ishavasya Upanishad, the first Upanishad in the traditional list. The presence of the Upanishad in it shows its philosophical and spiritual importance, even though some exegetes love to label the Yajurveda Samhita as ritualistic.

One of its verses, the seventeenth, gives the famous epigram:

**'I am he'** i.e., the essence of an individual on earth (**I**) and the supreme person (**he**) are identical. This is the pure monistic or non dualistic statement, amplified in many Upanishads.

It is the only Upanishad that gives an excellent synthesis of works, knowledge and enjoyment. It has only 18 mantras. We quote here only the first:

"All this is for the habitation by the Lord in all the individual universe of movement in the universal motion;

By that (attachment) renounced, you should enjoy; hanker not after any man's possession."

## Knowledge for all including Shudra

Yajurveda Samhita specifically states in the second verse (26.2) that the sage should speak the secret knowledge to all the persons, regardless of their status, profession or familiarity. The blissful **Word** should be taught to the *shudra* (labouring class) also; In this verse *shudra* takes precedence over the artisans (*vaishyas*). Again this verse calls upon the knowledge to be given even to the stranger *charanaya* and to our own members *svaya*.

So that I may speak the blissful Word to the masses of the people,

to the *brahmana* and the *rajanya* (*kshatriya*),

to the *shudra* and the *vaishya,*

to our own men and to the stranger.

Dear may I be to the *devas* and to the giver of the sacred gifts here.

May this my wish prosper; may that be mine. SYV (26.2)

## Pardon

This chapter has a prayer for the atonement of sins, committed knowingly and committed unawares including those 'against myself'. This specific verse is SYV (8.13).

"Of the sin against *devas,* thou art atonement;

of the sin against men, thou art atonement;

of the sin against the Fathers, thou art atonement;

of the sin against myself, thou art atonement;

of every kind of sin, thou art atonement."

"The sin that I have committed knowingly,

and that I have committed unawares,

of all the sins thou art atonement." SYV (8.13)

## Path of Unity

Verse SYV (20.25) is a classic prayer for the complimentary of the spiritual and the powers of ruling associated with our physical world.

Where spiritual and ruling powers (or warrior forces) move together in unity,

that world I will know as fully conscious (*prajna*), where *devas* with Agni dwell.

SYV (20.25)

*prajna:* The power of divine consciousness which permeates the ideal world. It is the power of consciousness which cognizes all things as objects.

In verse 26, there is also the mention of seven assemblies and the eighth which unites all. The seven assemblies are the seven cosmic planes or levels.

## Power of Yajna

Note *yajna* is not a mere ritual. It is a symbol of intense spiritual practice, both at an individual level and also at the collective level. At the end, the sage declares ' we have become immortal'. The verse SYV (9.21) is given below.

May life prosper by sacrifice.

May life-breath prosper by sacrifice.

May the eye prosper by sacrifice.

May the ear prosper by sacrifice.

May the back prosper by sacrifice.

May sacrifice prosper by sacrifice.

We have become the children of the Lord of life (Prajapati).

*devas!* we have attained heaven, we have become immortal. SYV (9.21)

## Prayer for Energy

Verse SYV (19.9) is a prayer for developing energy, manliness, vigour, conquering power etc.

Thou art energy, give me energy;

thou art manliness, give me manliness;

thou art strength, give me strength;

thou art vigour, give me vigour;

thou art wrath, give me wrath;

thou art conquering power, give me conquering power. SYV (19.9)

## Prayer for Peace, Amity and Happiness

This chapter SYV (36) has several prayers addressed to all the divinities. The third verse SYV (36.3) is the famous prayer to the Supreme Lord Savitr, popularly known as Gayatri of the sage Vishvamitra. The original mantra is in Rigveda (3.62.10). Here, there is a prefix namely

*'bhur bhuvah svah'* 'Earth, Midregion, Heaven or Perfect world'.

The remaining part is:

***tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi, dhiyo yo nah prachodayat***

The verses SYV (36.14) - (36.15) are dedicated to the energies or waters which also occur in RV (10.9.1) - RV (10.9.2)

I take refuge in rik, the Word;

I take refuge in yajus, the Mind;

I take refuge in saman, the breath;

I take refuge in sight and hearing.

Energy of speech with strength and my in-breath and outbreath! **YVS (36.1)**

Whatever defect I have of eye, of heart, of mind,

or whatever excess there is,

may Brhaspati remedy it.

Gracious to us be the Lord of the world. **YVS (36.2)**

Earth, midworld, Heaven!

The adorable glory of Savitri, God, we contemplate.

May he arouse our intellect. **YVS (36.3)**

By that means may the wonderful, gracious, ever-prospering friend

be present with us,

by what most powerful song invoked ? **YVS (36.4)**

What is the true and most noble of

joyous draughts that will inspire thee

to loosen the firmly held wealth ? **YVS (36.5)**

Be thou by us, thy friend,

Protector of thy singers,

with a hundred aids. **YVS (36.6)**

With what aids, O Hero! dost thou delight us?

what dost thou bring to thy worshippers? **YVS (36.7)**

Indra is King over all;

may there be grace on the biped, grace on the quadruped. **YVS (36.8)**

Gracious be Mitra to us and gracious Varuna, Aryaman;

gracious be Indra, Brhaspati, and gracious Vishnu of wide stride. **YVS (36.9)**

May the wind blow us health and the sun shine cheer on us,

and may Parjanya with loud noise rain his grace on us. **YVS (36.10)**

May days be full of bliss for,

and nights approach us with bliss.

Blissful to us be Indra and Agni with their aids,

blissful to us be Indra and Varuna to whom our offerings are made,

blissful to us be Indra and Pushan in battle,

and blissful Indra and Soma to grant us health and happiness. **YVS (36.11)**

Gracious be divine Waters for

our protection, be they for our drink,

and stream on us health and happiness. **YVS (36.12)**

Pleasant be thou to us, O Earth,

thornless, and our resting place!

Give us far-extending shelter. **YVS (36.13)**

Waters, you are health-giving;

bestow on us energy, so

that we may look on great delight. **YVS (36.14)**

Give us a share of your most beneficent rapidity,

like mothers longing with love. **YVS (36.15)**

So, gladly do we with you

to the home for which you make us live;

Waters! gives us progeny. **YVS (36.16)**

The peace in the sky, the peace in the mid-air,

the peace on the earth, the peace in waters,

the peace in plants, the peace in forest trees,

the peace in All devas, the peace in Brahman,

the peace in all things, the peace in peace,--

may that peace come to me! **YVS (36.17)**

Strong One, make me strong.

May all beings with the eye of friend!

May I look on all beings with the eye of friend!

May we look on one another with the eye of friend! **YVS (36.18)**

Strong One, make me strong!

May I live long to look on thee!

May I live long to look on thee! **YVS (36.19)**

Welcome to thy wrath and to thy glow!

Our welcome to be thy flame!

Let thy missiles burn our enemies.

Be our purifier, be graceful to us! **YVS (36.20)**

Welcome to the lightning, welcome to the thunder,

homage to thee, glorious Lord, who winnest us heavenly light. **YVS (36.21)**

Make us free from the fear of all that thou wishest;

give bliss to our children, security to our animals. **YVS (36.22)**

Friendly be to us waters and plants,

and unfriendly be they to him

who is hostile to us and to whom we are hostile. **YVS (36.23)**

That Eye of the sky, divinely placed, rising bright before us,

may we see for a hundred autumns !

And may we live for a hundred autumns,

may we hear for a hundred autumns,

may we speak for a hundred autumns,

and may we hold our heads high for a hundred autumns,

yes, even more than a hundred autumns. **YVS (36.24)**

## Prayer for the Boon of Companions in the Journey

The first verse in chapter 26 is the prayer for the boon for companions on the journey, both physical and spiritual, in which the sage spreads the knowledge among all persons as mentioned in verse 2 above.

May Agni and Prthivi in mutual harmony bring down for me this boon

May Vayu and Agni, in mutual harmony, bring down for me this boon

May Aditya and Heaven, in mutual harmony, bring down for me this boon

May Waters and Varuna, in mutual harmony, bring down for me this boon

May the Seven Assemblies and the Eighth which unites all beings fill our paths with what we desire.

May I be united with so and so. SYV (26.1)

## Seven Sages – Symbolism

We give here the verses SYV (34.49), SYV (34.55) dealing with the symbolism of seven sages. The seven sages are historical personalities. Different books enumerate them differently. One listing is Atri, Bhrgu, Kutsa, Vasishta, Gautama, Kashyapa, Angiirasa.

But in the spiritual interpretation, each of the seven sages represent specific psychological powers which are located within the body. This is clearly stated in the 55th verse.

> United in their praise-songs, united in holy chants,
>
> united in lustre, *divinely* elected,
>
> the Seven Sages, God-like, serene,
>
> following the path of the fore-fathers,
>
> took up the reins in succession
>
> like one seated on a chariot. SYV (34.49)
>
> The Seven Sages are lodged in the body,
>
> the Seven guard the home unerring,
>
> the Seven Waters seek the world of the sleeping One,
>
> and then awake the two unsleeping Devas
>
> who are companions at the rites. SYV (34.55)

## Steps in Spiritual Progress

Verse SYV (19.30) gives a procedure to attain the **Truth** beginning with self-dedication, *vrata*. *Vrata* is often translated as austerities like fasting. Correct translation is, 'law of workings'. Every one has to act according to his inner law, the law of workings. Here it is rendered as (self-dedication).

"By self-dedication (*vrata*) one becomes consecrated or initiated (*diksha*);

by consecration one obtains grace (*dakshina*),

by grace, faith and

by faith, Truth is obtained." SYV (19.30)

vrata: law of workings

## The Supreme Purusha

The famous hymn SYV (31) gives a symbolic account of the manifestation of the universe as a release of the powers in the Supreme. The Sanskrit word for creation is *srj,* i.e., the power inherent in a potential way is released.

The hymn here has twenty-two verses, of which sixteen are also in the Rigveda (10.90.).

The translation given here is that of the famous verse SYV (31.18) (not in Rig Veda) where the sage declares:

> I have known this mighty *purusha,* who is
>
> refulgent as the sun beyond darkness;
>
> by knowing him alone one transcends death,
>
> there is no other way to go.

## The transcendent 'That'

The chapter 32 has 16 verses. Sages of the Veda realized that the Supreme Power cannot be described by the epithets involving genders like he, she etc.

Hence they used the epithet **That,** *tat*.

The verse SYV (32.1) states:

Agni is **That**,...

......Brahman is **That, ..**

...Waters are **That....**

Verses like these point to the high spiritual and philosophical attainments of the sages.

The third verse states:

'There is nothing to compare with **That**' SYV (32.3)

***na tasya pratima asti***

According to Swami Dayananda of Arya Samaj, this verse implies that the persons of vedic age were against the worship of the Gods using *murti* or icon. Viewed in the context of the first verse, this claim is tenuous, at best. The image or *murti* icon is a symbol of the supreme power and this symbol is used in the Veda many times. Recall the famous *purusha* hymn in [RV 10.90] or in chap. 31 where the Supreme Person is symbolized by a being of innumerable heads.

Agni is That, Aditya is That,

Vayu is That, Chandramas is That,

the bright One is That, Brahman is That,

Waters are That, Prajapati is That. YVS (32.1)

All winkings of the eye arose

out of the radiant Purusha.

None has comprehended him

above, across or in the midst. YVS (32.2)

There is none to compare with him.

There is no parallel to him,

whose glory, verily, is great.

Hiranyagarbha etc. 'May he not destroy us' etc.

'No one other than thee' etc. YVS (32.3)

He is the deity who pervades all the regions,

born at first, he is also within the womb.

Verily, he who is born and is to be born,

meets his offspring facing him on all sides. YVS (32.4)

Before him there was nothing whatever born,

who pervaded the entire world of created things;

Lord of life, he rejoiced in his off-spring;

Possessed of sixteen parts, he unites the three lights. YVS (32.5)

He through whom the heaven is strong and the earth firm,

who has steadied the light and the sky's vault,

and measured out the sphere of clouds in the mid-air.

Who is the Deity we shall worship with our offerings? YVS (32.6)

When the mighty waters etc. He who in his might etc. YVS (32.7)

Vena beholds That Being, hidden in mystery,

in whom all find one single home;

In That all this unites; from That all issues forth;

He, omnipresent, is warp and woof in created things. YVS (32.8)

Let the Gandharva who knows the Eternal

speak of that station which is parted yet wrapped in mystery.

Three steps of That are in mystery hidden;

he who knows them shall be the father's father. YVS (32.9)

He is our Kin, our Father, our Creator,

he knows all ordinances and all beings,

in whom Devas, attaining life eternal,

have arisen to the loftiest station. YVS (32.10)

Having encompassed all creatures, encompassed all worlds,

encompassed all the regions and directions,

and approached the First-born of Eternal Order,

he with the Self entered into the Self. YVS (32.11)

And going swiftly round the heaven and earth,

around the worlds, around the quarters, around the sky,

and lengthening out the wide-spread thread of Order,

he saw That, he became That, he was That. YVS (32.12)

The wonderful Lord of the Assembly,

dear to Indra, lovable, who

bestows wisdom, has been approached by me. Hail! YVS (32.13)

The talent that Devas and Fathers esteem,

with that talent, Agni, endow me today. YVS (32.14)

May Varuna give me talent,

may Agni and Prajapati give it;

May Indra and Vayu grant me talent,

and Dhatr grant it to me. Hail! YVS (32.15)

Let both the spiritual and the political man

possess the lustre that I seek.

May the Devas give me the noblest lustre.

To thee, that lustre, Hail! YVS (32.16)

## Will of the Divine or *Shivasankalpa*

The first six verses of SYV (34.1) – SYV (34.6) constitute this subhymn. All the 6 verses end with the refrain.

***tan me manah shivasankalpam astu.***

On that – the auspicious-will of the divine—may my mind dwell.

The poet declares in the sixth verse that this is **that** which carefully guides all persons and also abides in the heart. By becoming conscious of the divinity within, we can intuitively perform actions effectively in the outer world.

The Divine Essence that goes far away,

from the waking, and likewise from the sleeping,

and that one far-travelling Light of lights,

On that-the auspicious-will of the divine-may my mind dwell. (34.1)

That by which wise men, skilful in rituals,

and steady in assemblies, perform their tasks,

that peerless Spirit that lies in all creatures,

On that-the auspicious-will of the divine-may my mind dwell. (34.2)

That which is deep knowledge, intellect, memory,

that which is the deathless Flame in living beings,

without which nothing whatever is done,

On that-the auspicious-will of the divine-may my mind dwell. (34.3)

That immortal Essence by which all

the past and present world is comprehended,

by which the ritual spreads with the seven priests,

On that-the auspicious-will of the divine-may my mind dwell. (34.4)

That in which the Rik, the Saman, the Yajus are held firm,

like spokes in the nave of a chariot-wheel,

in which all thoughts of living beings lie interwoven,

On that-the auspicious-will of the divine-may my mind dwell. (34.5)

That which guides men like a good charioteer

who controls fleet-footed horses with the reins,

that which abides in the heart, most swift and active,

On that-the auspicious-will of the divine-may my mind dwell. (34.6)

# Krishna Yajur Veda

## Overview of Taittitiya Samhita

TS is made up of seven books or Kandas, each Kanda having five to eight Prapathakas, each Prapathaka having nine to forty six anuvakas, a typical number being eleven to fourteen. The total number of Prapathakas is 44. Each anuvaka is either a collection of mantra or a brahmana passage. By mantra, we mean either a rk mantra following a specific metre or a *yajus* mantra being a short rhythmic phrase. Mantra rises from the innermost depths of the rshis and is revealed to them in their superconscient state. Hence the mantra embodies a deep chunk of knowledge or wisdom. It is futile to argue as the ancient *mimamsakas* do that a mantra has no meaning. A brahmana passage is a lengthy prose passage of 50 to 100 lines without any punctuation. It gives ritualistic explanation or anecdotes.

For the semantic connection between mantra and brahmana, see Sri Aurobindo's essay in the next section 2. Note that Ashwalayana Grhya Sutra, an authority for the upholders of the rites, states in (3.3) that, “the seers of the mantras are rshis, but the seers of the Brahmana are only acharyas'', i.e., persons who composed the Brahmanas are not rshis. So the brahmana-passages have much less authority than the mantras.

Some anuvakas are completely brahmana passages. There are some anuvakas in which one part is brahmana and another having mantras. One can easily make out whether a passage is brahmana or mantra.

Our focus in this book is on the mantras and their deep spiritual/psychological interpretation. A common misunderstanding is that the four Veda Samhita books are completely independent of one another. Nothing can be farther from Truth. All of them have similar thought patterns, grammar and usage.

Moreover there are a large number of rk mantras in TS which are not in the current Rig Veda text. All these rk mantras blend well in meaning with the yajus mantras and the rk mantras from Rig Veda. Then there are several rk mantras which are variants of the mantras in Rig Veda text; which version is original? These and other factors indicate that all the mantras of Veda were part of a single collection, which was later divided into four parts.

Is there a specific overlap between the mantras of RVS and mantras of TS? The answer is yes. We compare only mantras and exclude the brahmana passages which are not mantras. Roughly, the percentage may be about 33 for the entire TS, i.e., out of 100 lines of mantras, roughly 33 are from RVS. For details, see volume 1.

## Overview of Kandas

The Kandas 1 and 4 are mainly mantras. One half of Kanda 7 has mantras and the other half, brahmana. All others are mainly brahmana with the last anuvaka of every Prapathaka of every Kanda being compiled from the mantras mostly from Rig Veda Samhita. Kanda 5 is a brahmana on parts of Kanda 4. Kanda 6 is a brahmana on Kanda 1.

Kanda 1 has four important inner yajnas namely Darshapurnamasau (1.1), Agnishtoma (1.2-1.4), Vajapeya (1.7) and Rajasuya (1.8). Rajasuya is the royal consecration. Even though one usually regards it as an elaborate external rite of anointing the king with water (*abhisheka*), the person will obtain the full benefit only when he meditates and invokes the divine powers. The water poured on the head will not grant him anything.

Kanda 4 is perhaps the most important one among the 7 Kandas. It contains the famous litany Rudra, the *shatarudriya.* Its glory is praised in many Upanishads. The entire Kanda 4 is an excellent exposition of the principles and practice of the inner yajna or internal yajna for attaining overall spiritual progress.
Kandas 2 and 3 are mainly brahmanas. Half of the Kanda 7 contains mantra. The second Prapathaka of Kanda 7 deals with the adoration of the integers ranging from odd to even numbers, and ending in very large numbers like ten raised to the power of twelve. The other half of Kanda 7 is brahmana dealing with various types of yajnas ranging in duration from one day (*ekaha*) to a year. Parts of Kanda 5 and Kanda 7 deal with the Ashvamedha yajna.

One of the features of TS is that some of the mantras are repeated in the same Kanda or a different one.

A natural question is the meaning of the name *brahmana* for the prose passages. It means, "something connected to *brahma* or mantra such as rites or explanations of mantras or legends connected with mantra''. *brahma* means mantra everywhere. *brahma* or *brahmana* has nothing to do with the so called caste of that name which is a much later development. The introduction to Kanda 2 in Volume 1 indicates the symbolism in the brahmana passages.

## Taittiriya Brahmana and Aranyaka

Taittiriya Brahmana (TB) and Taittiriya Aranyaka (TA) are continuations of TS. Like TS they are mixed up with mantras, with Brahmana passages dominating. TB has sections dealing exclusively with mantras. TB has 3 Kandas or Ashtakas.

The complete Prapathaka 5 of Kanda 3 deals only with mantras. Kanda 2 of the TS offers brief explanation of some of these mantras in TB! TA has ten chapters (*adhyaya*) of which the first chapter is a Brahmana dealing with the construction of the fire altar. Chapters 3 and 4 deal exclusively with mantras. The famous hymn to Purusha, *purusha sukta,* which occurs in RV (10.90), SYV VS (31), Atharva Veda (19.6) occurs in the TA (3.12). TA version is slightly different and has more mantras than the Rig Veda version. Chapter 6 deals with funeral rites. The chapters 7, 8 and 9 of TA constitute the Taittiriya U.

The Chapter 10 is the Mahanarayana U. or Yajniki U.

## Yatayamam (Insipid)

We have already mentioned that the two of the most important Puranas, Vishnu Purana and Srimad Bhagavatam, regard Shukla Yajur Veda as *ayatayamam* (not insipid, full of essence) where as KYV is regarded as *yatayamam* (insipid or essenceless).

Famous Samskrt pundits like Satvalekar have debated extensively the reason why Krishna Yajur Veda is called "insipid or polluted' by a major authority like Vishnu Purana or Srimad Bhagavata. Two reasons are given, both of them are far-fetched, (i) the insertion of *brahmana* passages into the mantra text, (ii) the mantras in TS do not have reference to the name of seer who has the revelation of mantra. None of these are serious. Any one can distinguish the *brahmana* passage from a mantra. The presence of a *brahmana* passage is no more than a nuisance. The second reason is also far-fetched: why should the lack of *rishi's* name make it polluted especially since the *mimamsakas,* the main theoreticians and practitioners of the outer yajna, believe that Veda cannot contain the name of human beings, even if they are the seers of the mantra.

The real reason can be easily traced if one bothers to look into the actual texts of the Vajasneyi Samhita of Shukla Yajur Veda and the Taittiriya Samhita of the Krishna Yajur Veda. Shukla Yajur Veda is a book of 40 chapters or *adhyayas.* There is no title for each chapter.

The TS, on the other hand, has 651 anuvakas. Each anuvaka is given a title connected to rituals. The first anuvaka, i.e., TS (1.1.1) (kanda 1, prapathaka 1, anuvaka 1) is titled *"vatsapakarana"* (driving the calves). TS (1.1.2) as *"barhir aharanam,"* collecting the *barhi* grass.

Most offensive to any religious person trying to practice the virtue of non-violence (*ahimsa*) is the obsession of KYV TS with the animal sacrifice. The entire prapathaka 3 of TS, TS (1.3) is titled *"agnishtoma pashu"* the animals in the *agnishtoma yajna.* The titles given to the five *anuvakas* TS (1.3.7) through TS (1.3.11) are:

1.3.7: *pashurupakaranam,* driving the animal to the sacrificial altar (*yupa*).

1.3.8: *pashor vishasanam,* killing of the animal.

1.3.9: *samgnapitasya pashor vapor khedanam,* the removal of *vapa* or diaphragm of the (killed) animal and placing it in the fire.

1.3.10: *vasahoma,* the fire-ritual with the organs of the animal and its "juice'.

1.3.11: *gudakandahoma,* offering of the intestines into the fire.

Every mantra of the Veda is imbibed with deep wisdom and was revealed to the *rishis* when they were in a superconscient state. It is difficult to imagine that anyone with any sense could say that "drive the calves" or "kill the animal" is a direct revelation from the Supreme Being. Anyone who has seen the misery and pain suffered by an animal during its killing can only be shocked by these titles.

What is most shocking is that if we read all the verses in TS (1.3.8) with the title, "the killing of the *pashu*" there is no such act at all. What is being mentioned is that the human being should become conscious of the various organs of the subtle body. But the prevailing view in the time of the Vishnu Purana was that each of the verses were taught as if the killing or dismembering the animal is the only meaning of these verses. These proponents of the animal killing in TS KYV insist that these mantras have no other meaning.

As mentioned earlier about one half of the mantras of SYV (VS) are also in TS. Some of the mantras in TS (1.3) mentioned earlier also appear in SYV/VS in chapters 4-8. Commentators like Mahidhara who were addicted to rituals interpreted these verses as part of the animal sacrifice rite. But the text of SYV/VS is kept free from this abhorrent view. The text of KYV/TS has been 'hijacked' as it were by the proponents of animal sacrifice by assigning titles to *anuvakas* specifically mentioning animal killing and making the titles to be a part of the sacred text. No wonder Vishnu Purana and Srimad Bhagavatam regard KYV/TS as 'insipid and without substance' *yatayamam.*

S. who wrote his commentary on TS in which he forced every verse in it to yield a ritualistic meaning, especially those supposedly involving animal sacrifice.

Most of the priests in these yajnas were/are brahmins by caste and were/are strict vegetarians; they are easily scared of a dead animal, let alone kill an animal in cold blood or watch this act. Still because of the prestige of S and because of their fear that criticising the Vedic commentary is a sacrilege, many pundits even whisper any criticism. Even some of the Heads of the *mathas,* started by the great Shankaracharya for propagating Vedanta and the path of knowledge, are full of praise for the Sayanacharya's ritualistic commentary, completely avoiding the question of the morality of the animal sacrifice.

How can we make the KYV/TS become *ayatayamam,* i.e., full of essence? The first step is to delete the ritual based titles given to each anuvaka. Secondly one has to accept that TS mantras have an interpretation from the point of view of inner yajna, i.e., contemplating mentally the collaboration with Gods without any external effort or substance.

## Overview of Kanda 1

Kanda 1 deals with four important inner yajnas namely darshapurnamasau, agnishtoma, vajapeya and rajasuya. The kanda has 8 prapathaka. In prapathaka 1 is described the darshapurnamasau which is a brief and simple yajna performed on new moon and full moon days. The deities are Agni, the Lord of Will and Soma, the Lord of Delight. It begins with a prayer for marshalling the rays of knowledge. The next prapathakas, 2-4, constitute the famous Agnishtoma yaga for the deities Agni and Soma. For the ritualists this yajna involves animal sacrifice; the text itself does not mention the killing of animal explicitly. But a careful reading reveals that yajamana or the performer of yajna is himself the *pashu* or the animal offered. He offers all his organs and faculties to the deities in the inner heaven and they become perfected. The fifth Prapathaka has over 55 mantras from the Rig Veda text. The sixth Prapathaka offers several details on the inner yajna occurring in our subtle body. The seventh Prapathaka deals with the Vajapeya yajna whose aim is the protection (*peya*) of the plenitude of the life-force (*vaja*). The last Prapathaka deals with the Rajasuya. Usually one regards it as an elaborate external rite for anointing the king with water (*abhisheka*) during coronation ceremony; however the king will obtain the full powers only when he meditates and invokes the Divine. It quotes the famous Rig Vedic verse (5.62.8) invoking both the Goddesses Diti who lavishes us on the riches of the finite and Aditi who guards the infinite for us.

## Overview of Kanda 2

The Kanda 2 has six prapathakas, each having several anuvakas yielding a total of 75 anuvakas. Most of the anuvakas are brahmana passages. The last anuvaka of every prapathaka consists only of mantras mostly from the Rig Veda Samhita. Each brahmana anuvaka is one long sentence without any punctuation; it is a bunch of several sentences which are not separated clearly. Each anuvaka comprises several different topics.

### Contents

The Brahmana passages cover the following topics:

(i) Some details about performing of the rites and their benefits
(ii) Explanation of some mantras in TS and TB
(iii) Legends, their symbolism and their connection with the rites.

Even though Sayana Acharya declares that the whole purpose of the Veda is to achieve our desires and to avoid the inimical or undesirable, this purpose is really the subject matter of the Brahmana passages both in this book and in other Brahmana books. The desires may be getting prosperity, wealth, land, cows, health, honour, fame through public speech, children, successors, rejuvenation of body etc. Also, kings may have desires for kingdom or extending the existing kingdom with the adjoining villages, establishing peace among their citizens etc. Also the desire for rain is common to everyone. The undesirable things are illness, especially long-illness, death, poverty and lack of fame or public recognition.

The Brahmana passages name the specific rites (or yajna) required for achieving specific desires and give a few details regarding the performance of the rites, limited to the type of the offerings to the Gods in special vessels called kapala (potsherds) and the specific offerings or gifts to the concerned human priests in the rite. The details of the rites are in Bodhayana Sutras, Apastambha Sutras and other Shrauta Sutra texts.

On the surface, the Brahmana passages deal with outer rituals. But we have shown in detail elsewhere in kanda 1 that the outer rituals give clues to the inner yajna happening in our subtle bodies. This is done sometimes by the use of several epithets which forces us to doubt their physical status. For instance, consider *pashu* with its outward meaning of cow or animal. If we examine the epithets that occur for *pashu,* it is clear that in many cases it is not a mere animal, but a ray of knowledge. Recall *pashu* is connected to *pash* which means

'to see' as noted by the ancient commentator Yaska. So we translate *pashu* as Ray-Cow following Sri Aurobindo; the use of the word Ray-Cow indicates that the word in the text could be either a ray of light or an animal cow.

Similarly milk and curds which are products of cow are rendered as knowledge in a fluid (plastic) form. Ghrta is always clarity or mental clarity. *Aja duha* is usually rendered by S as goat's milk. But *aja* has also the meaning of unborn; thus *aja-duha* means the knowledge of immortality. We will have more to say on symbolism later.

Many Brahmana passages have ritualist explanations of the mantras occurring in TS. Taittiriya Brahmana and Aranyaka books have several mantras in them unlike Brahmana books of other Vedas. Several brahmana passages in kanda 2 give a ritualist explanation of the mantras occurring in the Taittiriya brahmana. For instance, TS (2.5.7), TS (2.5.8), and TS (2.5.9) explain some of the mantras occurring in TB (3.5) [ashtaka 3, prapathaka 5]. TS (2.5.9) gives a detailed phrase by phrase explanation of two mantras occurring in TB, namely (3.5.3.1 and 3.5.4.1). We have already seen that mantras in kanda 1 do not specifically mention any rite or ritual, but the translators render it as if each mantra was describing an aspect of the ritual. The brahmana passages in kanda 6 give the ritualistic explanation of the mantras in kanda 1.

## Legends and symbolism

The Brahmana passages contain several legends dealing with Prajapati, the original creator, deva-asura conflict, the misunderstandings between the Gods, the slaying of Tvashta' s son Vishvarupa, origin of tittiri, the origin and killing of Vrtra, giving sight to the blind, etc. Several versions of the same legend like the slaying of Tvashta' s son occur in different Prapathakas and anuvakas. The legend of "sun not rising" or "sun not shining" is in several anuvakas. Each legend deals with a particular type of difficulty or shortcoming experienced by the concerned beings which was resolved by appropriate gifts to the concerned beings or persons. Then the legend declares that a human, confronted with a similar problem, can resolve it by performing an appropriate yajna involving specific offerings and gifts.

All these legends make sense only if we try to understand the symbols behind them. A literal reading of the legend can lead us to serious misconceptions of the text. For instance, consider the legend of 'sun not shining' or 'sunrise not occurring' mentioned in several anuvakas. Based on a literal reading of this legend, Max Muller states that the Vedic poets were so ignorant that they were not sure that the sun will rise everyday. The phrase 'sun not rising' signifies that

the poet feels surrounded by darkness (*tamas*) and he does not feel the dawn or onset of the light within.

Persons who are staunch followers of the ritualist commentary of Sayana Acharya (S) state that the commentary of S is superior because it gives the direct or literal meaning whereas the spiritual interpretation depends on the indirect meaning. The statement gives the impression that ritualists or S do not resort to symbolism. This statement is not true. Shabara, the authority for ritualists and Sayal:la use symbolism wherever it is convenient to them; for instance consider the passage in TS (2.1.1.4) which we will quote only briefly. The detailed text with translation is in the first anuvaka of this kanda. "He (Prajapati) took out (from his body) his omentum (*vapa*) and placed it in the fire. From that the hornless goat came into being .........." Shabara Swamin, the great exponent of the ritualism (mimamsa) explains this verse in his mimamsa-darshana (1.1.10). He states that: "Prajapati may refer to an eternal object such as (i) air, (ii) the sky, or (iii) the sun; the omentum (vapa) may mean (i) rain, (ii) wind, or (iii) the rays of sun; the fire implies (i) the fire of lightning, or (ii) fire of the rays (*archisha*) or (iii) the terrestrial fire; and the word *aja* (goat) signifies here (i) food, (ii) a seed, or (iii) a plant."

What is all this if not symbolism? But this symbolism serves no purpose other than stating *aja* is not an animal or *vapa* is not a part of body. See the text for an interesting interpretation based on pranayama.

Sometimes the text itself indicates the symbolism. TS (2.3.2) states, "Honey is the body of man; in that he offers honey in the fire, certainly the sacrificer places his body in the fire." The text is obviously not stating that the sacrificer jumps into the fire; his entering into the fire is symbolic. TS (2.5.6) gives a variety of symbols for the new and full-moon rite. The Brahmana passage in TS (1.6.7.4) declares that "yajna is the bolt - (*vajra*), hunger or want (*kshudha*) is the enemy of man. Indra smites the foe (hunger) with the bolt."

Sometimes the legend is related in such a silly way that it makes one to think that there should be a deeper meaning. For instance, Indra recovers the cows stolen and stored in a cave by Vala. Indra drags each cow one by one holding their neck; because of the pulling the (cows) became hunchbacked! Animals are not boxes to be plucked one by one.

*Aja* means both a goat and 'free from birth'. In many places the second meaning is more relevant. For instance consider TS (2.1.1.4) quoted earlier; the word *ajastupara* is translated as "hornless goat". Why is the poet adding the epithet 'hornless'? It is reasonable to assume that the poet by using the epithet 'hornless' wants us to focus on the second meaning of *aja* as 'free from birth'. Thus the verse states "the knowledge of the freedom from birth took birth".

Clearly this rendering makes the verse TS (2.1.1.4) more interesting. Similarly *ajaduha* can be rendered as the "milk or knowledge of immortality". However no attempt has been made so far to understand the symbolism in all the anuvakas.

As mentioned earlier, the brahmana text states that if a particular rite is done, the associated desire will be satisfied. There is no mention of devotion or meditation or tapas. The impression is that a mechanically 'correct' performance of the rite is sufficient. No additional qualifications or conditions are mentioned for the success.

The explanation of the so called *abhichara* (magic) rites and the rites for causing disturbance or quarrels among persons is problematical. We have mentioned earlier that all these difficult passages and legends need to be explained symbolically. But the traditionalists prefer to read the text literally following the lead of the commentators Jaimini and Shabara.

Summing up we believe that the brahmana passages were composed at a time which is much later than the age of the mantras. The deeper meaning of the mantras had receded into the background. The outward rites had become dominant. The outward rites became more and more complex. Still here and there the Brahmana passages have interesting philosophical and symbolic statements clearly worthy of our serious study. We will quote the text of one such statement in TS (6.5.10):

***yadvai yajnasya samna yajusha kriyate shitilam, tad yadrcha tad drdham***

Whatever is achieved in the sacrifice by yajus and saman is unstable; what is done by the rk is firm and strong.

## Mantra anuvakas

Every prapathaka has one anuvaka consisting only of mantras, most of them from Rig Veda Samhita. The prapathaka 6 has two such anuvakas.

There are also several anuvakas having interesting yajus mantras. TS (2.3.10) contains short and beautiful mantras dealing with the life-energy (prana) and sama chants. It also has interesting meanings for commonly misunderstood words like dakshina. The mantras in anuvaka (2.3.9) entitled, "Gods of affection" are also interesting.

We note also here the vast difference between both the contents and style of the mantra part of TS and the brahmana part of TS. The mantra part is poetry. The

mantras repeatedly mention the idea of devotion and surrender (*nama*) to the deities. There are several verses in which the deities are adored as in the vibhuti yoga of the Bhagavad-Gita. Some are philosophical dealing with meditation and mental aspects.

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## Overview of Kanda 3

This Kanda has 5 Prapathakas, each having eleven anuvakas totalling to 55 anuvakas. The last anuvaka of all Prapathakas have only mantras. Otherwise most of the other anuvakas are mainly brahmana passages. There are some anuvakas having both mantra and brahmana.

This Kanda has more information on the New and Full Moon Sacrifice discussed in TS (1.1) and the Soma-sacrifice dealt with in TS (1.2)-TS (1.4).

We give here some highlights from the point of view of the spiritual-psychological understanding of the Veda.

Since yajna is the subject matter of the entire Veda, there are many references to it. The symbolism of yajna is referred to in many verses:

Vishnu is sacrifice, (3.5.1, 3.1.10),

Yajna is the sacrificial body of Indra, (3.37),

Prajapati is yajna, (3.2.3),

Yajamana is the ahavaniya fire, (3.1.3),

Gods perform yajna, (3.3.2).

The TS clearly states that, "yajna should be harmless' (3.1.9).

There are several passages indicating the role of prana such as (3.1.4), (3.1.7), (3.2.3), (3.5.2), (3.5.9); (3.5.10) states, “prana moves towards yajna, vamadevya saman energises prana, prana energises the yajna''.

There are several indications for the role of metres, chanting, udgita etc., in (3.1.2), (3.1.6), (3.1.7), (3.2.9).

There are several philosophical passages such as, “the concept of *rtam* (Truth in movement) (3.3.5)'', "the concept of Beyond, (3.3.6)'', “medha mantras, (3.3.1)'', ‘beauty, (3.3.8)', "Soma is generated for whole world, (3.2.8)'', "making offerings to Gods expecting the fulfilment of desires is not right, (3.2.8)'', “speech from silence, (3.2.5)'', fourth realm, (3.4.2)'', “existence and non-existence, (3.5.8)''.

In the Veda, Gandharvas and Apsarasas are not their counterparts in the Puranas. The entire anuvaka (3.4.7) describes their dual role as the Purusha-Prakrti pair.

The symbolism of Gods is given in several places such as (3.5.8). “Prajapati is all the deities, (3.5.9)''. The anuvaka (3.4.10) describes the role of Vastoshpati who is the deity of journey and the house in the Veda.

(3.4.6) and (3.4.8) mention the role of kingdom and that which supports the kingdom (*rashtrabhrt*).

There are anecdotes involving rshis in (3.1.7), (3.1.9) and the conflict between Gods and Asuras in (3.4.6).

## Overview of Kanda 4

### Importance

Apart from the famous Gayatri mantra, the Sandhya worship mantras and the Purusha sukta, the most popularly known part of all the four Vedas is the litany to Rudra-Shiva, *shatarudriya* or namaka hymn in TS (4.5). Its glory is praised in many Upanishads and it is regarded as an Upanishad in the list of 108 Upanishads.

If the most famous part of Kanda 4 is the litany in Prapathaka 5, i.e., (4.5), then why is it not placed in the beginning? The explanation of the ritualists is that the first four Prapathakas (4.1) through (4.4) describe the ritual of the construction of the fire-altar with bricks of various types. Only after the fire-altar is ready, can the ritual involving (4.5) be performed. For the ritualists, there is nothing special about the ritual involving the Prapathaka (4.5). The commentator S regards all the mantras in (4.5) as addressed to Agni.

But the explanation given by the ritualists for the Kanda 4 is very superficial. For instance what can we make of the statement occurring in (4.4.1) namely, "may these bricks (*ishtaka*) become milch-cows (*dhenavah*)"; this passage is repeated in many places. How can bricks become cows?

The focus in this book is the antar-yajna or internal yajna occurring in our body all the time. From the view of internal yajna, what is the overall message of the Kanda 4? What is the essence of each one of the seven Prapathakas in it? Is there a justification for the appearance of the Shatarudriya in the fifth Prapathaka instead of in the beginning? All these questions will be answered here.

### Essence of Kanda 4

All mantras of the TS, specifically those of Kanda 4, espouse a special type of yoga called here as the Vedic yoga, whose essence is the inner yajna. TS mentions in many places that this yajna is a journey.

A common synonym for yajna is *adhvara* which means a journey (*adhva:* path, *ra:* movement). The aim of the Vedic yoga is to establish an all-sided perfection in both the individual and the society. The focus here is on the development of the inner potential, i.e., that connected with inner physical body, with the prana energy, those connected with our mental and supramental energies. From the inner development follows the development of our outer physical body and the outer aspects visible to the eyes and the senses. This perfection cannot be

instantaneous. This upward journey involves seven steps or stages, each Prapathaka is one step in the journey.

Who journeys? It is the soul of the seeker with all the associated prana energies and the subtle bodies which travels to the World of Light (*svar*). In the Veda, the standard symbol for the soul is the bird (*shyena,* hawk). It is the bird that goes to the heaven, perfects all its energies and organs and returns to earth in its divinised condition.

The anuvaka (4.1.1) quotes RV (10.13.1) to stress that each one of us is a child of immortality. Attaining the divine perfection is our birthright.

Method: What is the main tool in this inward journey?

A fundamental idea in the Veda is the creative power of the Vedic word or mantra. The entire manifestation of the cosmos was the result of the mantras. Similarly rshis realised that every mantra recited with the appropriate metre (chhandas), rhythm or chant along with the understanding of its meaning results in a creative act with a high degree of perfection. That is why the rshis were called as world-builders (*loka krt,* RV 9.86.21, 10.133.1). See (4.3.10) and (4.3.11) in this Prapathaka.

There are many varieties of chants or recitation. A mantra of Rig Veda is called a rk mantra and it is in one of several metres (such as Gayatri, Anushtub etc.). The total number of syllables in it determines each metre.

A Sama Veda mantra is a rk mantra with more elaborate reciting notation. A Stoma is a chant of the Sama mantra with additional syllables added and sung in an elaborate way according to specific rules. If a rk mantra recitation takes one unit of time, the same text sung as a stoma may take ten to twenty units of time. Sri Aurobindo labels these stoma chants as hymns of affirmation because they affirm or complete the development initiated by the rk mantras.

These chants play an important role in the development of the subtle body and its powers.

Note that a mere mechanical chant will not yield any results. A CD player plays the chant perfectly, it will remain a CD player and will not become divinised. Only a person who chants with faith knowing its meaning and focussing his awareness makes progress. A person makes mistakes in chanting because he is partly unconscious during the process. Recall that Rig Veda states that there are four levels of speech namely *para, pashyanti, madhyama* and *vaikhari.* The human ear hears the last one. But for the power of the word to manifest in us, the speech must originate in the higher levels, *madhyama* and above.
Brief overview of the seven Prapathakas

The cosmic power who leads our journey is Agni, the power of aspiration. The whole Prapathaka (4.1) deals with the method of establishing Agni with us and stabilising his presence.

The body and mind have to be prepared to bear the force of the Agni being kindled; otherwise the body may break like an unbaked jar (*ataptatanu*) as stated in RV (9.83.1). The Prapathaka (4.2) deals with the various steps needed for this stabilisation process. The titles of the eleven anuvakas give clues to their contents. The kindled Agni is compared to the swan (*hamsa*). The symbolism of *hamsa* is described in the famous *hamsa* mantra (4.2.1).

The Prapathakas (4.3) and (4.4) deal with the development of our subtle body. Currently our abilities and the qualities of the tasks we perform are limited because the relevant psychological powers like sustained attention, creativity, inspiration, memory, discernment and discrimination etc., have not developed to a great extent. Development of the subtle body means the development of abilities to manifest these powers and hold them within.

These two Prapathakas synthesise a variety of knowledge including the role of cosmic creation, the four yugas, the rshis, the four types of wealth etc. The names of yugas or rshis are not the same as in the popular puranas. They are summarised in the four tables (4.3.2), (4.3.3), (4.4.2) and (4.4.3). The details about the development of subtle body given here are found nowhere else in the entire Hindu spiritual and religious literature.

The fifth Prapathaka (4.5) is the famous Shatarudriya or namaka hymn to Rudra-Shiva.

Again the recitation of this part introduces new energies into the subtle body and the body has to be stabilised to hold these energies. This is the purpose of the sixth Prapathaka (4.6). This section has a natural division into two parts. The first part consisting of six anuvakas deals with the manifestation of the Gods both in the universe and within us. The suktas RV (10.81) and RV (10.82) dealing with creation are reproduced here. By hewing new paths, Agni guides our ascent to the higher levels of consciousness; finally Agni's work is complete. Yajamana manifests in himself the *rtam* (the Truth in movement). The Gods literally attend on the yajamana.

The last three anuvakas, constituting the second part, deal with the perfection of the life-force, prana, in us. All the mantras of the two suktas of RV namely RV (1.162) and RV (1.163) dealing with the praise of the life-force, *Ashva,* is given here; clearly from all the epithets, the *Ashva* is not a four legged animal but the life-force. RV (1.163) begins with the statement, ‘You are born in the Sun'. Verse (163.12) states that the life-force is meditating and wants to reach the world of

Gods, become purified and then return to earth. There is no question of the killing the horse.

After the recitation of the Rudra litany in (4.5) and carrying out the strengthening of the subtle body and the life-force through the hymns in (4.6), we are ready for the final goal of the Kanda 4 namely achieving all-round perfection. This is achieved in (4.7) in two stages. The first stage consists of the first eleven anuvakas termed *vasor-dhara* or *chame* hymn, i.e., the shower of the riches of various vital and mental powers.

The first eleven anuvakas (4.7) give a list of qualities or powers, each of which ends with the word *cha me;* the phrase *yajnena kalpatam* occurring in the ninth and tenth anuvakas is understood to be applicable for all; *cha me yajnena kalpatam* means, “May that quality or property or power become manifest in me or become perfect in me''. Clearly yajna here is not a mere outer ritual. The root word *yaj* has the meanings of worship, gathering or developing, giving. By performing the inner yajna, we gather or develop in us the powers associated with cosmic Gods like Indra, Agni. By giving, we mean self-offering, the offering (symbolic) of all we have to the divine. Thus by this continuous interaction of giving and receiving with the cosmic powers, all the psychological powers in us develop and become perfected. See also (1.6.6) and (1.6.12) in volume 1 on the role of yajna in attaining perfection.

The second stage consists of the anuvakas 12 and 13 dealing with the birth of the plenitude, the birth of all types of energies in plenty. The program concludes with the prayers of thanksgiving to various deities in anuvakas 14 and 15.

## Overview of Kanda 5

The Kanda has 7 Prapathakas, having in all 120 anuvakas. Unlike Kanda 3 and Kanda 4, it has only one or two mantras from Rig Veda. The last two anuvakas of the first two Prapathakas have only mantras, mainly yajus.

This Kanda quotes several brief mantra passages from Kanda 4 and gives brief explanations. Like the Kanda 4, the dominant topic here is the construction of the fire-altar (*vedi*). However it does not give many details of the physical construction of the fire-altar. It explains the nature of the fire-altar, giving the names of the several types of bricks used and the anecdotes associated with the fire-altar. This Kanda displays a variety of symbolism. For instance (5.6.10) states, "The first layer is earth, the second is midworld, the third is yonder heaven, the fourth is sacrifice (yajna), the fifth is *sacrificer*''. In the same place it gives the bonding material for each layer namely, plants and trees for earth, the birds (life-energies) for midworld, Nakshatras (asterisms) for heaven, the dakshina (discernment or sacrificial fee) for the yajna, the offspring for the yajamana.

Later, the same anuvaka states "there are three layers because Agni is three fold ....''. See also (5.4.2) for another type of symbolism for fire-altars. (5.4.11) mentions the possible shapes of the fire-altar as those of hawk, heron, alaja bird, triangle, wooden vessel or trough (*drona*), circle and cemetery (*smashanachit*). The most common shape is that of hawk (or eagle) (*shyena*). The text symbolises the head, tail and the two wings in a variety of ways. Even the seasons are related to the fire-altar.

The altar is made of a variety of bricks or building bricks (*ishtika*) whose names indicate their symbolism and operation in the internal yajna occurring in the subtle body. Again anecdotes are related with some bricks emphasizing their importance. For instance *yagnatanu* (Indra's powers or extensions of Indra) is one type of brick. It is said that Indra, the lord of the divine Mind, found these in some place, he powered himself with these (bricks) and could defeat the demonic forces. Some other names of bricks are *swayam-matrnna* (life energy or self-perforating), *yajnatanu* (body or powers of yajna), *bhuyasam* (increasing), *nakasad* (seat in heaven), *chhandas* (metres), *pranabhrt* (bearing life-energy), *adhipatni* (governing lady) etc.

There are several anecdotes. Some deal with Prajapati and declare that all the animals or beings created by him moved away from him after creation (5.7.10). Another anecdote is that the metres refuse to carry the oblation to the gods unless suitably rewarded. It is said that Agni went away from the gods (5.5.6). It is said that he hid himself in a reed (vena) (TS (5.1.1)). It is said that when Agni went away from Prajapati, Prajapati searched for him with a horse. So Prajapati

is identified with a horse (5.1.1). Of course, all these anecdotes are symbolic. For the sake of brevity, we will refrain from giving the explanation.

There are several references to the life-energy Prana and its associates apana, vyana, udana. (5.2.5) declares that Prana is Sun. (5.2.9) states that 'gold, honey and Prana' should be mixed for immortality. (5.2.10) specifically mentions the unification of Prana, i.e., the harmonization of the various operations of life-energy including breath. The entire anuvaka (5.2.11) gives yajus mantras for making the life-force peaceful with the aid of metres and chants. The anuvaka (5.2.12) symbolises the Prana by a steed and details how to restore its wholeness.

There are several references to the metres, each involving a different type of symbolism. (5.2.1) states that Vishnu won the worlds by metres. (5.2.3) mentions the mantra of Vishvamitra and its abode. (5.3.7) relates the Prana with the life-span (*ayu*). It glorifies the Atichhandas metre, (5.3.8). The role of metre bricks in the construction of the fire-altar occurs in (5.3.8). It is said that by metres one wins Ray-Cows. The proper placement of the various metres like Gayatri, Anushtubh, Brhati etc. are indicated in (5.3.8). The root meaning of metres (chhandas) as covering is mentioned in (5.6.6).

In several places there is mention of the harmony between the kingly power and the power of Brahmana, the persons who know the Word. (5.6.10) mentions that the seers regarded the digging of earth as cruel (5.1.5). They were concerned with the excessive burning of the fire. There is a prayer for the grant of brilliance (Varchas) on all the four groups namely Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra implying that caste system was not opprosive or rigid.

There are several philosophical passages. It quotes RV (4.2.11) identifying Diti and Aditi with the finite and infinite, with the multiplicity and unity respectively.

Waters are named as divine energies. (5.6.1) gives the different names for waters and rivers using symbolism.

It mentions very briefly the Shatarudriya hymn (4.5). Even though Kanda 5 is said to be a Brahmana (exposition) passage on Kanda 4, it does not mention the famous creation hymns RV (10.81) and RV (10.82) and the Ashvamedha hymns RV (1.162) and RV (1.163) mentioned in TS (4.6).
The last 15 anuvakas of Prapathaka 5, last 13 anuvakas of Prapathaka 6 and the last 25 anuvakas (excluding the last) of Prapathaka 7 give a long list of animals or birds, and their limbs and the deities associated with them. Even though these animals or birds are claimed by the commentators to be sacrificed in the Ashvamedha yajna, there is no mention of this statement in the text. The listing

is a typical example of the microcosm-macrocosm correspondence common in Veda.

## Inner Yajna

The goal of the inner yajna is perfection of all our faculties, those of the physical body, those connected with our life energy such as passions, emotions, attitudes, ideals, etc, and those connected with the mental domain such as intelligence, analytical ability, intuition, discrimination between Truth and Falsehood, etc.

Yajna is a collaborative effort between the Gods, the cosmic powers and human being. Each God is associated with a particular psychological faculty, Agni with the power of Divine Will, Indra with the Divine Mind and actions, Soma with Delight, Usha with the initial Dawn of spiritual ideas, etc.

Gods are eager to extend their help to aspiring human beings. If we invoke a particular deity with faith with an appropriate hymn of Rig Veda fully knowing its deeper meaning then that deity is sure to respond to the call. If the aspirant's body is able to bear the power, the deity will plant a seed of his power and this seed will grow continuously. Sometimes the aspirant feels no effect. For instance, a student who has no mental aptitude will not feel any effect if he recites with faith the famous *gayatri* mantra invoking intelligence from Savitr. In this case the body of the aspirant, physical or mental, is not able to bear the power that Savitr wants to give, and hence Savitr will keep quiet.

The preparation and maturing of the body can be done by an inner yajna. The Taittiriya Samhita has several inner yajnas like *darshapurnamasau, agnishtoma* etc., which are in the first kanda. Once one of these yajnas is done the body can bear the power which the deity can pour down. These inner yajnas involve the use of the *rk* mantras, *yajus* mantras or *sama* mantras.

Another type of yajna is the harmonisation of all the faculties. We will give some details of each of these two type of Yajnas from the Taittiriya Samhita.

In the inner yajna, all the actions are done in the subtle body of the yajamana, i.e., the yajamana is not the outward-acting human being, but the soul. There is no need for any external or material offerings mentioned above. Recall the *brahmana* passage, *“yajno vai vishnu",* i.e., yajna is Vishnu, or, yajna pervades everything. Also yajna is done by yajna,

***“yajnena yajnam ayajanta",***

[TS (3.5.11), RV (10.90.16)]

The subtle body of the yajamana has the fire-altar *vedi* along with the fire. Yajamana himself is also the *pashu.*

Aitareya Brahmana (11.11) emphasises that yajna is essentially a mental act; all the chants and physical acts that are involved must really be transformed into thoughts and resolves, for all speech and action are founded on thought. *“manasa vai yajnas tayate manasa kriyate''; tayatemana* means to extend the range of mind (*vistaryate*) according to S (quoted in [R1]).

TS itself gives details about how the inner yajna should be conducted. The different prapathakas of TS give different ways of performing the inner yajna. I will choose the *darshapurnamasau* yajna in the first prapathaka of the first kanda, TS (1.1). It has fourteen anuvakas. It is done on every full moon and new moon day.

## Inner yajna in TS (1.1)

The first anuvaka begins with the mantra *ishe-tva-urjetva* (you for impulsion and you for abounding force). It is addressed by the yajamana to the universal *prana* energy deity, *vayu.* The whole anuvaka of eight short mantras, *rk* and *yajus,* is a call for assembling all the knowledge needed for the inner yajna. *pashu* stands for the ray of knowledge derived from the root *pash,* to see.

The inner yajna is performed by the cosmic powers or deities Indra, Agni etc. They begin with the proclamation *'yajnasya ghoshadasi'*. The Gods are prayed to take their seats on the seats fashioned by mantra, *manuna krta* [TS (1.1.2)]. It is crafted by the intrinsic law of each entity, the self-law, *svadha,* ‘that which bears it.'

Recall that according to TS (1.7.4), yajna itself is the supreme deity, Vishnu. In the third anuvaka there is a prayer for the yajna for the manifestation of delight, one of the chief aims for performing the yajna. The delight coming from Soma is described as (*madhumattama*), supremely honeyed, spread with Truth (*rtavari*).

The next several anuvakas deal with preparing the body, both the physical and subtle, for the performance of yajna. Interestingly enough, simple yajnas are called as *paka yajna* in the *brahmana* passages, i.e., yajna which matures (*paka*) the body. Our petty emotions, passions, feelings and adverse forces like *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *mada* (arrogance) and *matsarya* (jealousy) prepare a thick veil or covering over our inner soul and prevent its light from reaching the outer body; in ignorance the body does stupid things. This covering is like the husk of the rice grain or paddy (*vrihi*); which should be removed.

The anuvaka 4 is a prayer for the two principal cosmic powers of this yajna, Agni and Soma. Agni is the Divine will and seer (*kavi*), Soma is the lord of the Divine Delight which upholds everything.

Anuvaka 5 deals with the purification of the physical body so that the cosmic powers can enter, grow in the body and manifest their powers as a child grows in the womb. The purifying agency is *dhurva* which is the incense in the ritual. The prayer here "*dhurasi*......" in TS (1.1.4) is recited even today in all religious festivals when the incense stick is lighted. It offers protection against the hostiles who do not like the humans to enjoy (*aratiyata*). It ends with a prayer to Agni to protect it. The covering has to be removed by force of will invoking Agni and the force of mind invoking Indra.

In the next step, the entire body has to be integrated and firmed up. It is viewed as a support, *skambha,* to the heaven [TS (1.1.6)]. By the force of inward breath (*prana*) and outward breath (*apana*), the primal life-energy *prana* is made to reach all the organs of both the gross and subtle bodies in us. Note that breath or outside air is not *prana*.

Next step (anuvaka 9) is the recognition of the fire inside supported by knowledge, the inner fire-altar (*vedi*). It is the power of will and uses the body which has been firmed up for further work. Its first step is to mature the body for further work (anuvaka 10).

Next, the role of the Gods as world- builders is recognised (anuvaka 12). By world we mean the manifestation of powers and its activities. For example, giving is an important activity. It involves acquisition of the required felicities or resources like knowledge, love, wealth, etc. Then there is the problem of finding the appropriate person to receive the knowledge or felicities or riches. Then there is the mode of transferring of the gift, i.e., teaching, etc. All these different but related activities constitute the world of giving. Obviously it is a vast structure where it takes years, even decades, to make even small progress, let alone perfection. We feel we are praying for the benefit of all, all of whom we may not even know.

Finally there is the consciousness of some progress in our spiritual body. We feel consciously the grace from above which floods the body. We feel the aura of protection (*ava*) which supports us (*bhrta*). For the ritualists, *avabhrta* is the concluding shower of water on the yajamana. The inner yajna ends with the adoration of the deities with the Rig Vedic mantras which always occur in the last anuvaka.

## Harmonisation of all faculties (TS 4.1)

### (agnichayana with bird-shaped altar (shyenachit))

First of all we should become conscious of each and every part of our body, their functions and the relationship of each part to others. For example, become aware of the outer eye which sees, the associated inner organ of the eye which records the image seen and the part of the mind which interprets the meaning of the image and files it accordingly, and if necessary it activates the other parts of mind like the *manas* to take specific action. Then we firm up the operations by invoking the control of *prana, pranayama,* whose outer forms are the breathing exercises. Then the collectivity of the body, subtle and gross, is a vehicle of knowledge *vedi,* which later became known as the fire-altar.

The cosmic power symbolised by the fire carries the collectivity or ensemble to the world of Light, *suvar* or *svar,* offers each part to the appropriate God who perfects it. Agni returns with the perfected ensemble. This is the journey of yajna mentioned in hundreds of Rig Vedic verses. *adhvara* is the journey or pilgrim journey. *svar* is not really outside of us. It is within, it is the *sahasradala,* the thousand-petalled centre of the *tantrics.* Of course one such attempt will not give us the complete perfection. We need several more.

We give the quotation TS (4.1.10). It is also in Shukla Yajur Veda VS (12.4).

### TS (4.1.10):

“You are a bird of golden wings (*suparna*) capable of going up (*ut*) (to the higher realms) and modelling it (*mana*). Your head is threefold (*trivrtta*) (worlds of matter, life and mind); your eye is *gayatra* (all the hymns which have the power of saving). Your wings are the *brhat* and *rathantara* Sama hymns; your soul is the *stoma* (*rk* mantras); your organs are the rhythms or metres (*chhandas*)*;* your name is yajus; Sama hymns of Vamadeva are your body; your tail is the works done as yajna and those which are not yajna, i.e., those to be avoided (*yajnayajniyam*)*,* your hooves are the masters of knowledge (*dhishniya*)*.* You, the *suparna* and *garutman,* go to heaven (*divah*) and return (*pata*) from the world of Light (*svar*).''

The next *anuvaka* TS (4.1.11) gives the benefit of harmonisation. It contains several famous mantras including (i) Gayatri mantra and (ii) Sarasvati mantra.

The *gayatri* mantra addressed to Savitr is same as RV (3.62.10).

“On the excellent splendour of the Lord Savitr, we meditate;

May he activate (*prachodayat*) our intelligence.''

The mantra [TS (1.4.11)] is same as RV (1.3.10) addressed to Sarasvati, the Goddess of speech and inspiration.

“She, who is the impeller of auspicious truths

And the awakener of all happy thoughts,

May that Sarasvati uphold the yajna.''

Our body is in a position to accept the powers to be bestowed by Savitr and Sarasvati.

## Animal Sacrifice or Inner Self-offering

It is a common perception that sacrifice of animals is an integral part of several (but not all) outer Vedic yajna rites. We do not dispute this assertion. Persons who like to eat the flesh of animals can create a variety of reasons for their actions. Some moderns declare that meat eating is essential for maintaining health or strength. We are not interested in these justifications.

Sayanacharya (S) has declared that several parts of TS such as (1.3) deal only with animal immolation. The uncritical admirers of Sayana say that, "S has given these meanings to these mantras based on his profound knowledge of the grammar. If you do not accept this meaning, what is your alternative meaning? Can it be supported by grammar?''

To be specific, let us begin with the anuvakas (1.3.8) to (1.3.11) which are declared by S to deal with animal immolation.

A careful reading of each verse in these anuvakas reveals that the claim of the ritualists is unwarranted. All the verses can be viewed as describing the yajna occurring in the subtle body of the yajamana. One of the aims of the inner yajna is the perfection of all the parts of the human body, both the subtle and the gross aspects. The procedure is to recite a mantra asking the organ to ascend to the inner heaven, become charged with the higher energies, become more perfect and then descend to the earth. Asking the organ to go to heaven (which is within us) does not mean that the body is dismembered.

Again it is interesting to note that the offering of the *vapa* (diaphragm) of the animal into the fire has an interesting interpretation. During the exercises of *pranayama,* the diaphragm becomes contracted and falls into the fire in the stomach (*jathara*), the so-called *jatharagni.* Persons have forgotten the details of the *pranayama* and declare that the physical *vapa* or diaphragm of animal is being dropped into the physical fire in the altar. We discuss the symbolism of *vapa* given by the commentator Shabara [R4] while explaining TS (2.1.1), "prajapati offered his own *vapa* into the fire'' *prajapati atmano vapam udakkhidhat.* Clearly prajapati has no physical body or physical *vapa.*

The titles given by the ritualists to the individual anuvakas give ample clues to their content from the view of inner yajna.

The anuvaka 5 is entitled searching for the sacrificial post *yupa* (*yupa chedhanam*). In the outer sense, it is searching for the correct type of wood from which the *yupa* post may be made. *yupa* is the wooden post on which the ritual immolation takes place in the outward rite. In inner yajna, recall that yajamana himself is *yupa,* according to the Brahmana books which are the authorities for the ritualists. It is titled "the search for the sacrificial post *yupa* in the inner

body'. The seer is trying to locate the subtle *yupa* which supports the inner being.

Anuvaka 6 is titled by ritualists as the establishment of the *yupa* (*yupa-sthapanam*). In the inner yajna this anuvaka is an adoration of the *yupa.* It mentions explicitly that *yupa* is hidden in the midworld within.

According to the ritualists, anuvaka 7 deals with the bringing of the animal to be killed or immolated and the anuvakas 8, 9 and 10 deal with the cutting of the animal (*vishasanam*), separation of the parts, and the offering of *vapa* (diaphragm) of the animal to the fire (anuvaka 9) and the offering of the intestine of the animal into the fire (*vasahoma*) in anuvaka 10.

A careful reading of all the verses in the anuvakas reveals that we are dealing with the symbolic separation of the various organs of the human yajamana and their offering to the higher powers for purification and perfection. Physical slaying is nowhere mentioned.

Here we assign the following titles based on the actual content of the anuvaka:
Anuvaka 8: offering his own life symbolically for the yajna.
Anuvaka 9: Symbolic offering of the various organs or parts of the body for purification and perfection.
Anuvaka 10: Inner yajna in the body involving *pranayama* (breath control) and the harmonisation of the parts.

Anuvaka 11: Offerings in the inner yajna.

S has an obsession with the killing of the animals in the yajna. He forces this meaning wherever possible. As an instance consider TS (1.4.36). Here the names of various organs are mentioned. There is no mention of killing as in the earlier anuvaka. Still S states that the flesh of all these organs is offered to the fire. There is no word for flesh in the text.

Even in his commentary on Rig Veda Samhita, he views many *suktas* as dealing with animal sacrifice even though the deeper meanings are clear even for a casual reader. For instance take RV(1.162) dealing with the steed. He translates *shamitu* and *shamitara* as the immolator (slayer) of the steed (*vishasana karta*) and develops this sort of meaning for the *sukta.* What is being described is life-energy, whose symbol is the steed.

For persons who believe only in the *samskrt bhashya* we refer to the *bhashya* of Swami Dayananda Sarasvati (SD) on the Shukla Yajur Veda Vajasaneyi Samhita (VS) [C8]. The mantras in TS (1.3.8) to (1.3.11) referred above are in VS (6.8) to (6.22). SD has shown that these verses can be interpreted as dealing with

*dharma* without involving any animal killing. He also gives the grammatical derivation of the meanings.

## Outer Yajna and the view of Mimamsaka

For the outer yajna, the main theoretician is Jaimini who wrote the famous *sutras* of *purva mimamsa.* Kumarila and Shabara wrote very valued commentaries on his work. Originally when the word Veda was used, it meant only the collection of mantras, the revelations. Jaimini (J) introduced radical changes in the Hindu thought and convinced others of their validity. We will mention some of his views which the orthodox in the Hindu society accept without questioning.

(1) According to J the only purpose of the mantras of the Veda is their use in the performance of rituals. Hence J declared that the Brahmana books which gave the ritualist explanations of the Veda mantras are as sacred as mantras.

(2) Jaimini (J) did not believe in the concept of devotion (*bhakti*) or in the existence of Gods like Agni, Indra, etc. He stated that the “correct performance of the rite'' yields the fruits of yajna such as long life, prosperity, sons, a place in heaven, etc. Who gives the benefits? J's answer is: it is the power of the words *vak* in all the mantras in the ritual which gives the benefits. Shabara in his commentary on J's work says, “If Agni, Indra and other Gods are eager to come to yajna to accept the paltry (valueless) offerings of ghee, rice, etc., they themselves cannot have much power. Such deities do not exist. It is the weak-minded who imagine these Gods and ascribe powers to them.''

(3) If yajna does not yield the fruit such as sons or prosperity, it is because the yajna was not performed according to the strict guidelines. The Brahmana books and the Shrauta *sutras* spell out some details. Whenever there is a doubt about the choice of an act among several alternatives, one has to use the full power of *nyaya* (logic) and *tarka* (inference) to find the correct decision without any doubt. The reason why Sayana's commentary runs to four thousand pages of small print is that he clarifies the supposedly correct decision by quoting several texts.

(4) For the *mimamsaka,* a mantra has no other meaning except its use in the ritual. Consider a popular mantra, *“agnim ide''.* J would say that the popular meaning is irrelevant since Agni as a deity does not exist and as such *''ide'* “to call'' has no meaning. So we should not even ask “what is the meaning of mantra''.

(5) J declares that many of the mantras from Rig Veda Samhita which have no use in any rite are completely irrelevant.

Thus the *mimamsaka* with their extraordinary debating skills have convinced most household brahmins (or their leaders) about the complete validity of their

views. Even today *purva mimamsa* is an important subject of study in all Samskrt *pathashalas.*

The irony is that most of the *mimamsaka* pundits belong to the *smarta* tradition whose favourite deity is Ganapati or Skanda or Narayana, etc. They subscribe to the Vedantic ideas of Shankara who regards that the rites or *Karma* are for the ignorant. At home they very much believe in the existence of Gods like Ganapati; they may do the *japa* of the Ganapati mantra or Tryambaka mantra as part of everyday worship. But when they go to the school they teach the ideas of *purvamimamsa.* Our views of inner yajna are completely opposed to their views. For details of the *mimamsaka* view point, see the collected works of Sri Kapali Sastry or ''Unveiling the Light in the Veda', a compilation from his work on the Veda.

Note however that Sayana had great reverence for the Veda and the Gods like Agni, Indra; he believed that these Gods grant the desires of the performer of yajna. He believed that every mantra verse has a meaning related to the ritual. He accepts that some verses of RV like (1.164) may have a spiritual interpretation. Most orthodox pundits in India are followers of Sayana.

The popular rites performed in India now-a-days like Chandi *homa,* Gayatri *homa,* etc., are relatively simple rites with tantric basis and the use of a small number of Vedic mantras. They have nothing to do with the complex Vedic rites mentioned in the Brahmana books.

## Inner Yajna in Bramana Books

Brahmana books are of much later origin than the Samhita books. One or more of these books are attached to the each *shakha* of the Mantra-Samhita book and each of these books explains the corresponding Mantra-Samhita book in a ritualistic way. For instance ‘Shatapatha Brahmana' is associated with the Vajasaneyi Mantra Samhita of the Shukla Yajur Veda, made of 40 chapters or *adhyayas.*

There are some traditionalists wedded to outward rituals who do not want to accept the idea of inner yajna. According to them, the traditional authority for the yajna are the Brahmana books. Some politely ask, “do the Brahmana books support the idea of inner yajna?'' The haughty ones declare that “Brahmana books do not accept or endorse the idea of inner yajna.'' Needless to say, knowledge of these haughty persons about the Brahmana books is cursory and without any substance.

The composers of the prose Brahmana books were aware that few persons have the mental or psychological aptitude needed for performing the inner yajna. They felt that Veda could be preserved only by stressing the rituals which could be done or witnessed by all. They were not mistaken. So the bulk of the Brahmana books deal with explanation of the rites, myths, etc. But here and there they introduced sentences clearly stating the primary importance of inner yajna.

### Aitareya Brahmana

“Yajamana is the sacrificial altar (*yupa*), he is the stone or rock, Agni is the womb of the gods; born of the offerings made through agni, the womb of gods, the yajamana with the body of gold rises upward to the world of heaven. . . . . .'' (Ai. Br. 2.6.3)

### Taittiriya Samhita

### (*brahmana* passages)

A myth repeated in many verses both in RV and YV is Indra killing the demon Vrtra with his bolt Vajra. TS (1.6.7.4) quoted below explains this event symbolically.

"Yajna is the thunderbolt *vajra,* the enemy of man is 'want, desire or thirst for objects and passions (*kshud*)'. In that he fasts and does not eat (i.e., he does not accede to the desires), he straightway smites with a bolt the enemy 'want'."

In TS (2.4.12) Vrtra is hunger.

TS (1.5.2.10) states, "The sacrificial cake *purodasha* is Yajamana, offering (*ahuti*) is the *pashu.*"

TS (1.7.6) states "sacrificer is the sacrifice."

"Yajamana offers all he has, all he is to the gods. . . . Agni is all-gods. . . . he offers himself as the *pashu* of the Agni *shomiya* rite (discussed in TS 1.2 - 1.4), the gods perfect him."

TS (1.8.9) refers to the *svayamkrta vedi,* the altar made by oneself and *svayamkrta idhma,* the fire made by oneself. These phrases refer to the inner yajna, since the altar and fire in the outer yajna are made by priests.

## Shatapatha Brahmana

The tenth kanda is called *agni rahasyam* or the secret of Agni, giving the legends and mystic significance associated with the *agni chayanam* rite. The esoteric character of some sections of this tenth kanda is referred to in the book Brahma-sutras, which is highly valued by the *vedantin,* the proponent of the knowledge aspect of the Veda. This book [V7] creates a correspondence between the entire cosmos and the fire-altar, *vedi.* Recall that *vedi* is regarded as the Yajamana, the soul of the person performing the ritual. Thus the correspondence relates the macrocosm and the microcosm. All the five aspects of the physical fire-altar namely, the enclosing stones, the bricks, *sudadohas,* the earth-fillings, and finally space-filling bricks, have their correspondences in the three realms of earth *bhuh,* the mid-region or *antariksha* and the heaven or *dyauh* or *svar.* The correspondences are listed below in tables 1 and 2. Table 1 gives the correspondence between the fire-altar and the three realms of earth, midworld and heaven. Table 2 gives the correspondence to the sun, year and human body.

Each set concludes by saying: "Thus this comes to make up the whole Agni and the whole Agni comes to be the space-filler; certainly whosoever knows this, thus comes to be that whole Agni who is the space-filler." [R3]

### Table 1

| Fire Altar | Earth | Midworld | Heaven |
|---|---|---|---|
| Enclosing stones | Ocean | Horizon | Heavenly Waters, *apah* |
| *Yajusmati* bricks | Men | Birds | Gods |
| *Sudadohas* | Cattle | Rain | Celestial Food |
| Earth- fillings | Plants & trees | Light rays | The Mansions of Soma |
| Filling bricks | Fire | Wind | Sun |

**Table 2**

| Fire Altar | Sun | Year | Body |
|---|---|---|---|
| Enclosing stones | 360 regions | 360 Nights | 360 bones |
| *Yajusmati* bricks | 360 sunrays | 360 Days | Marrow |
| *Sudadohas* | Space between rays | Dawn/Dusk | Integuments |
| Earth- fillings | Solar energy | Minutes and Hours | Flesh, Skin |
| Filling Bricks | Regions & rays | Night & Day | Whole body |

## Inner and Outer Yajna – Concordance

| Sanskrit word in TS | Meaning in inner yajna | Meaning in outer yajna |
|---|---|---|
| yajna | cosmic power which allows for the interaction between Gods and humans; it is a journey (*adhvara*) to planes of Light; yajna is Vishnu (TS 1.7.4); yajna is done by yajna (TS 3.5.11); yajna, go to yajna (TS 1.4.44). | elaborate rituals ranging from a day to several months |
| *pashu* yajna | see *pashu* under offerings | |
| goal of yajna | perfection (*purnatva*) in every aspect of our body- physical, *pranic,* mental and overall perfection; this perfection is achieved by the birth of cosmic powers; for details see TS (1.7.9), TS(4.7) and other passages. | material prosperity with cows, horses, long life and children etc. |

### Fruits of yajna

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *praja* | successors of knowledge | children |
| *go* | knowledge | four-legged animals |
| *ashva* | life energies | horses |
| *ratha* | vehicles for the upward journey to the higher plane | chariot |
| *amrta* | immortality | the mystical elixir |
| yajamana | performer of yajna, it is the soul. The body of the yajamana is the *purodasha* cake, TS (1.5.2); his body is the fire- altar *ahavaniya* TS (3.1.3). | human performer of yajna who is the patron; he provides all the material resources for the priests who conduct the sacrifice. |

## Gods or Cosmic Powers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *purohita* (placed in front) | the cosmic powers like Agni who perform the inner rite. | the human priests who conduct the yajna. |
| *devah* (Gods) | cosmic powers who assist the soul of man in his/her ascent to perfection; each god manifests his/her power in the devotee, this procedure is called as the birth of God in man; the progress of man is continuous going from one peak to another, RV (1.10.2). | cosmic powers who accept the offerings of ghee and soma offered in the fire and reward him/her with material prosperity of cows, horses, long life, children. |
| Agni | the power of divine will in man, the first one, the seer. | the God of fire who accepts the offerings and reaches them to the Gods. |
| Indra | lord of the divine mind; he perfects the human mentality, recovers the knowledge (cows) stolen by hostiles like Vala so that man can have the knowledge; he allows the divine energies to pour down from heaven and not be obstructed by the hostile cloud Vrtra. | Indra likes the soma drink; when he drinks he gives gifts easily like an inebriated person; he is like the rain God who makes the clouds give up the water in them. |
| Usha | spiritual dawn | physical dawn |
| Sun | the spiritual sun whom the adepts can see all the time. | physical sun in the sky |
| Soma | the delight of all existence;<br>RV (10.85.3) states, “one thinks one has drunk soma-juice obtained from | the deity behind the soma creeper; creeper is well known in ayurveda; it has no intoxicating property. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | soma creeper; but no one can taste him whom the brahmanas know to be Soma. | |

### ***havya*** **or offerings**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *ghrta* | it is the purified mental consciousness or thought offered to the fire, Agni, within. | purified butter or ghee offered in fire. |
| *suta soma* | it is the delight of existence, generated or released *(suta)* by all our work; offered to Agni within. | soma juice obtained from creeper; offered to the fire. |
| *samit* | body-*prana-manas* | fire sticks, firewood |
| *purodasha* (cake) | it is the human material body made of *anna* matter and baked to make it mature and then offered; alternately it is the collection of desires to be offered to fire (Vishnu suri). | it is a cake made of rice, it is baked and offered to the fire. |
| *pashu* (offering) | yajamana is the sacrificial altar (Ai.Br. 2.6.3); *pashu* is the herd of the various organs of physical body offered symbolically in the inward fire for further perfection; it can be the offering of all the negative or demonic qualities in us to the Gods . | it is an animal such as goat which is slaughtered on the *yupa,* its organs offered to fire: many words in TS are assigned meanings to support the idea of animal sacrifice. |

### ***yajna ayudha*** (implements)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *vedi* | fire-altar (*vedi*) which is | the fire-altar in the house |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | the centre of yajna | of yajna |
| *yupa* | yajamana's inner body is the sacrificial altar (*yajomano vai yupah*) | sacrificial altar made of wood on which the animal is killed |
| *kapala* | human skull to hold the mind | platters or potsherds to hold the cake |
| *graha* | recepticles for Soma | vessels to hold Soma juice |
| *barhi* | indicates something vast derived from *brhat,* vast, which can seat the Gods | grass straw on which the Gods are seated |

**Worlds *lokah***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *bhu* | world of matter | earth |
| *bhuvah* *(antariksha)* | world of life-energies which sustain all life. | midworld |
| *suvah* | world of mind | heaven |
| *svar* | world of Light | |
| *avabhrtha* (conclusion) | shower of energies from above which supports us (*bhrtha*) and offers protection (*ava*). | conclusion of the outward yajna with a bath. |

## Inner Yajna in the Upanishads

Upanishads are not the revolt of the new teachers like Janaka or Ashvapati against the ritualism of the Veda, as some moderns opine. Rather, the Upanishads capture the fundamental spiritual thought of the Veda Samhitas and express them in a way an intellectual mind can understand. Chhandogya and Brhadaranyaka are the two most voluminous and most important of them all. Like the Rig Veda, they express the deep spiritual thought using the words of rituals like soma pressing, fire, lighting, *diksha* etc.

The importance of understanding the symbolism in the Upanishads has not been appreciated. Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, which is quoted frequently in Vedantic literature, begins its first mantra (1.1.1) with the symbolic description of the sacrificial horse. It compares the various parts of the horse to the various aspects of our cosmos like dawn, sun, rivers, etc. The table of concordance is given below.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| atmosphere | = | its belly |
| dawn | = | the head |
| earth | = | the underbelly |
| fire | = | its open mouth |
| four quarters | = | flanks |
| grasses & trees | = | its hair |
| intermediate directions | = | ribs |
| lightning | = | its yawning |
| months & half-months | = | joints |
| mountains | = | liver & lungs |
| rain | = | its voiding urine |
| rain-cloud | = | its flesh |
| rising sun | = | its forepart |
| rivers | = | its bowels |
| sand | = | its food |
| seasons | = | its limbs |
| setting sun | = | the hind part |
| sky | = | its back |
| speech | = | the voice of the horse |
| stars | = | its bones |
| sun | = | its eyes |
| the days and nights | = | its feet |
| thunder | = | its whinnying |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| wind | = | its breath |
| year | = | the horse's body |

Whatever may be this *ashva,* it has nothing to do with the physical four- legged animal horse. See [C14] for a discussion of the symbolism of this *ashva.*

Both the Aitareya Upanishad and Brhadaranyaka Upanishad declare that symbolism is an essential aspect of the Upanishad. The Aitareya U. (3.14) and Br. U. (4.2.2) specifically state:

“The deities or Cosmic forces love being hidden *(parokshapriyah)* i.e, they reveal themselves only indirectly.''

Chhandogya U. (7.7.1) declares that “Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharvana have to be understood by adoration and understanding (*vijnanena*)''.

We give here two selections: one from Chhandogya Upanishad and the other from Mahanarayana Upanishad which is the last chapter of the Taittiriya Aranyaka at the end of the Taittiriya Upanishad. Both of them explain the concept of inner yajna in different ways.

## Chhandogya Upanishad (3.17)

The most celebrated person in the Indian culture who insisted that all activities should be done as a yajna is Sri Krishna. The germ of this idea is in the teaching which Sri Krishna obtained from the sage Ghora Angirasa. The text of the Upanishad (3.17) states that the teaching here was given to Krishna, son of Devaki, by the rishi Ghora Angirasa.

The section (3.17) views the entire life as the performance of yajna, inner and outward. It views the entire outward life as made of seven steps. For each step, it gives a meaning of yajna which can be viewed as internal or external.

1. Intense activity with little food as in the days of *brahmacharya* or studentship: In the yajna, it corresponds to *diksha* or consecration, both in inner and outer yajna.
2. Leading an ordinary calm life: this corresponds to *upasad* yajna. In the inner yajna, it corresponds to sitting quietly feeling the presence of the deity. The outward *upasad* yajna allows for intake of moderate quantities of food like milk. It is not strenuous.
3. Period of enjoyment in life involving laughing, talking and sexual activity of intense pleasure. In the yajna, this corresponds to the recitation of

*shastra* (Rig Veda) and *stotra* (Sama Veda). This activity releases intense delight in the inner yajna.

4. Gifting: In outer yajna, this step corresponds to offering *dakshina* to priests and Gods. In the inner yajna, it corresponds to the offering of all you have and yourself to the Divine.
5. Achieving maturity in life by developing the qualities of straightforwardness *(arjava)*, non-violence (*ahimsa*), telling the truth (*satya vachana*) and practising askesis *(tapas);* development of these qualities is rarely mentioned in the outer yajna. In the inner yajna, their development is essential.
6. The manifestation of new powers, such as new thoughts, new way of doing things, effective ways of teaching students, etc. The word used in this Upanishad is *soshyati,* which means the birth of the Cosmic powers, like the power of will (Agni), mental powers (Indra), etc. In the ordinary yajna, one usually prays for the material benefits like cows, horses, long-life and children.
7. The final step in life is death, *marana;* the corresponding word used in the text is *avabhrta.* In the outer yajna, *avabhrta* is the concluding shower of water on the yajamana. In the inner yajna, it means the shower of divine energies which offers protection (*ava*) and also upholds us (*bhrta*).

This section ends with a mantra (1.50.10) from the Rig Veda addressed to the Sun.

“Beholding a higher light that shines up above this ignorance, we have come to the most excellent Light, Surya, God among Gods.''

We find here the seed of the idea that all aspects of life should be handled as yajna (Bhagavad Gita 4.28):

***dravya yajna*** (gift of wealth)

***tapo yajna*** (tapas)

***yoga yajna*** (practices of yoga)

***svadhyaya yajna*** (self-study and recovery of knowledge by tapas)

***jnana yajna*** (yajna of knowledge through teaching)

**Mahanarayana Upanishad**

**(anuvaka 80)**

(It is anuvaka 64 in the Sayana edition.)

In the case of a man of knowledge *(vidhusha),* the yajamana is his own Self *(atma).* His faith is his wife; his body is his sacrificial fuel *(idhma);* his chest (*amura*) is his altar *(vedi)*; his hairs are his holy grass; the Veda he has learnt is his tuft of hair; his heart is his sacrificial post *(yupa);* his desire *(kama)* is his clarified butter *(ajyam);* his anger is his animal *(pashu)* to be immolated; his askesis *(tapa)* is his fire; his sense-control (*dama*) is his immolator *(damah shamayita);* his gifts are his *daksina;* his speech is his *hotr* priest; his breath *(prana)* is his *udgatr* priest; his sight is his *adhvaryu* priest; his mind is his *brahman* priest; his hearing is his *agnid* priest; so long as he is borne *(dhriyate),* it is his consecration *(diksha);* what he eats, that is his oblation; what he drinks, that is his drinking of soma juice; when he delights himself, that is his *Upasad* rite; when he walk, sit and stand that is his *pravargya* rite; that which is his mouth, that is his *ahavaniya* Fire; that which is his *(vyahrti),* that is his offering of oblation *(ahuti);* that which is his knowledge *(vijnana),* that is what he sacrifices *(juhoti);* when he eats in the afternoon and forenoon, that is his *samidhoma* (oblation of fuel in the fire); the three divisions of the day forenoon, midday and evening relating to him are his *savanas;* the day and night are his *darshapurnamasa* sacrifices; the half- months and the months are his *chaturmasya* sacrifice; the seasons are his animal sacrifices; the *samvatsaras* and the *parivatsaras* are his *ahargana* sacrifice; the total sacrifice is, indeed, his *sattra;* death is the *avabhrtha* or completion of his sacrifice.

## Ashvamedha

We give the deeper meaning of *ashva* and then give the spiritual, psychological interpretation of the Ashvamedha. We make a clear distinction between the Ashvamedha or horse-sacrifice as an outward rite and that as an inward yajna. The external rite is declared to be the ‘king of the rites' by Shatapatha Brahmana and the rite was performed by kings. Even though the rite itself is performed over a period of three days, the needed preparation may take a year or two.

The concept of yajna has been clarified in the separate essay.

Ashva or Horse: “It is an image of the great dynamic force of Life, of the vital and nervous energy. It is a force -- a figure of Prana, the universal Life-energy. Originally it must have implied strength or speed or both, before it came to be applied to a horse. In the first or root significance, it means, “to exist pervadingly'' and so, “to possess'', “have'', “obtain'' or “energy''. Besides this original sense inherent in the roots of this family, it has its own peculiar significance, existence in force, --of strength, solidity, sharpness, speed, -- in *ashma,* stone, *ashani,* a thunderbolt, *ashri,* a sharp edge or corner and finally *ashva,* the strong, swift horse.'' (SA)

The symbolism of the horse is quite evident in the hymns of Dirghatamas to the Horse of the Sacrifice, RV (1.162) and RV (1.163), the hymns of the various rshis to the Horse Dadhikravan and opening of the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad in which *usha va ashvasya medhyasya shirah,* (“Dawn is the head of the sacrificial horse'') is the first phrase of a very elaborate figure. (SA)

Consider the Taittiriya Samhita of the Krishna Yajur Veda which is viewed as describing the outward rites by almost all traditionalists. Its last anuvaka of the last Kanda (7.5.25) begins with the sentence, “he who knows the summit of the intelligence (*medhya*) of the horse (*ashva*) becomes illumined and fit for the sacrifice''.

***“yo va ashvasya medhyasya shiro veda shirshnavan medhyo bhavatu''.***

The rest of this anuvaka TS (7.5.25) till the end is mostly identical to the Br.U. (1.1.1) and (1.1.2) quoted earlier and develops the cosmic form of the horse. The end of TS (7.5.25) is same as that Br.U. (1.1.2), ending with the phrase *“samudra evasya bhandhuh samudro yonih''.* (The sea (*samudra*) was his brother and sea his birthplace (*yoni*).)

**Ashvamedha:** The Horse-sacrifice is the offering of the Life-power with all its impulses, desires, enjoyments to the divine existence. The life-soul (Dwita) (RV

5.18.2) is itself the giver of the sacrifice. Dwita is the god or rshi of the second plane of human ascent.

Trita is the God or rshi of the third plane, full of luminous mental kingdoms unknown to the physical mind.
There are two different types of Ashvamedhas; one is a complete inner yajna involving the prana-shakti and does not involve any horse; the second is an elaborate rite in which the animal steed plays a key role. In the second, it is assumed that the horse is slaughtered; this seems to be the practice in relatively later times such as that of the Ramayana. I guess in the early days, even though the horse was used, it was set free afterwards and not immolated. The custom is similar to the one which exists even today in some villages where a bull is worshipped but it is set free afterwards. It is never yoked again.

## Inner Yajna:

Recall that all the horse-sacrifice mantras in the Rig Veda are in RV (1.162) (22 mantras) and RV (1.163) (13 mantras). In the external rite one more mantra from the TS is used namely (5.7.24) which is similar to the last passage of (7.5.25) which is again identical to the beginning passage of Brhadaranyaka U. Thus we are dealing with 36 mantras. Also note that both RV (1.162) and RV (1.163) are revealed to the rshi Dirghatamas, all of whose suktas RV (1.140) through RV (1.164) are full of deep symbolism. Also recall the mantras, ‘yajamana is yajna', ‘yajna is Vishnu' occurring in many mantras in the TS. We can easily understand the deeper meanings of these 36 mantras by paying careful attention to every word in them and by not being carried away by the meanings assigned by commentators and translators. Ashva the steed is the standard symbol for Life-energy or Life-power *prana* both inside the human and in the cosmos. *medha* means both ‘offering' and ‘intelligence'. Ashvamedha means offering of the life-power with all its impulses, desires, enjoyments, frustrations and also its material counterpart.

There are naturally three questions: To whom is it offered? Who offers it? What is the goal or purpose in the offering?

We will begin with the third question. The life-power or *pranashakti* is continuously varying in us; when we are enthusiastic it is more; when the *pranashakti* is low, the immunity to diseases is affected and we get diseases formally ascribed to external agents like bacteria. Bacteria are there all the time, but they can easily enter the body when the immunity is low. In the realm of Hatha Yoga and Pranayama, there are several methods for recharging the prana.

What is given in the Veda is the basic method of rejuvenating the life-force and the associated physical body.

As an answer to the first question, the Life-force in its imperfect condition is offered to the divine existence in general and the Gods Indra, Pushan and Tvashtr. Pushan is the nourisher who nourishes all the aspects of prana. Tvashtr, the divine architect, perfects the forms which have deteriorated. Indra, the lord of Divine Mind, leads the prana. Indra gives the intelligence for the prana to prosecute its activities. Using the power of discrimination *svadhiti,* the different aspects of life-force which need rejuvenation are pointed out. There is no physical cutting of the body, only the recognition of the different aspects needing healing.

Finally we answer the second question 'who offers'. A key idea in the Veda is that behind the changing life-force there is the fixed and eternal life-soul, the soul of the life energies, *Dwita,* mentioned in Rig Veda. It presides over the progress of the life-power. The life-soul, also called as *aja,* the unborn, leads the life-power as mentioned in many mantras.

Once the life-soul offers the life power to the deities, the life-force becomes perfected and it returns to the human being. There is no question of killing or dismemberment.

TS (4.6.8.2) (same as RV (1.162.2)) gives the secret of the Ashvamedha. The actual words in the mantra are in parenthesis.

"The life force with universal form (*vishvarupa*) and golden lustre (reknasa) on being purified and completely covered by the physical body is held and lead (nayanti) in front by the unborn life-soul (*aja*) with easy gait (*suprang*) and with the appropriate mantra-sound".

TS (4.6.8.3) (or RV (1.162.3)) (second half): Tvashtr (the divine architect) accepts the life-force (*arvata*) with love and makes it full of delight (*abhijinvati*) and ready for the happy revelations (*saushra vasaya*).

Both these verses indicate that the physical steed of Ashvamedha symbolises the life-force only. There is no killing of steed.

The description of Ashva-Dadhikravan in TS (1.5.11.11,12) (same as RV (4.39.6, 10)) (p. 299, volume 1) is also relevant.

## The outer rite:

In popular imagination, Ashvamedha is identified with the ritual slaughtering of the horse. The Brahmana part of the Taittiriya Samhita, Taittiriya Brahmana, Vajasaneya Samhita and Shatapatha Brahmana offer many details on the ritual of Ashvamedha involving the killing. We give here an excerpt from the book by R. Panikkar.

"It is royal sacrifice offered by a victorious king. It is the most solemn and impressive cultic celebration of the Vedas and at the same time it is one of the most secular and political. The priestly role is not here so prominent as in most of the other sacrifices. Though its actual duration is only three days, preparations for the rite take long months or even, according to the prescriptions, up to one year or sometimes two, with yet another year to conclude the ritual''.

"At the moment of sacrifice the royal court, including the queen who has an important role to play at a certain moment, is assembled together with the entire population. At the start Soma juice is offered and then, after many ritual acts, the horse is immolated with solemnity. Numerous other animals are also led to the appointed spot and certain ones are offered in sacrifice. After the sacrifice of the horse has been performed the prescribed procedure demands the sacrifice of a number of cows, followed by the distribution of honoraria and other gifts to the priests.

Today we are perhaps in a better position to understand the nature of this sacrifice, which has been the subject of much debate among scholars. Without taking part in the discussion we may see in this sacrifice the final, minutely detailed elaboration of a long process in which pre-Vedic elements, fertility rites, cosmogonic references, social motives, political factors, and priestly interests all play a part, together producing a highly elaborate and no doubt impressive ritual. In spite of its complicated, soon outmoded and at times degraded ritual, the overall impression created by this rite, encompassing as it does the whole of the universe, is undeniably splendid. It is often called the Great Sacrifice, *mahakratu,* the great display of force and power. It blots out all sins, fulfils all wishes, answers prayers for a son, and also, at a deeper level, fulfils or perfects Prajapati and identifies with him the one who is offering the sacrifice.'' [R. Panikkar, "The Vedic experience'']

The steed as a symbol of the nation

Taittiriya Brahmana, which is really a continuation of Taittiriya Samhita, mentions this aspect. The beginning of 8th Prapathaka, TB (3.8.9) states, "The aim of the yajna is integration. All the peoples are unified''. (*samgrahanyeshtya yajate imam janatam samgrhnaniti*).

TB (3.8.9.6) states: “Ashvamedha is the nation. Those who work for the extension of the nation, they protect the Ashvamedha...” . (*rashtram va ashvamedhah rashtre khalu va ete vyayachchhnate ye ashvam medhyam rakshanti…*).

The epic Ramayana in the chapter (1.24.33) mentions the Ashvamedha and the role of queen Kausalya in it. A vulgar interpretation is given without understanding the symbolism. The horse symbolises the nation and the seed of the emperor or the successor. Kausalya's participation is a prayer for the seed of the nation to manifest symbolically in her.

## Understanding the deeper meaning of the mantras:

We accept that RV mantras were recited during immolation. The primary question is whether the mantras themselves support unambiguously the ritual killing? To answer this question, we have to pay attention to every word of the 35 mantras in the two suktas and their meanings.

The commentator S and translator Keith assign meanings to the words so as to emphasize the idea of ritual killing. We should ascertain the basis for the assigned meanings. I will give here only 4 examples; there are many more.

*ikshamana* RV (1.162.13), TS (4.6.9.2): *iksha* is connected with sight. But S renders it as a wooden rod to check whether the meat has been cooked.

*sunah* (RV 1.162.13): It occurs in numerous mantras with the meaning of sons or successors. Here S translates it as a knife for cutting meat.

*aja:* Appears in RV (1.162.2), TS (4.6.8.2), RV (1.163.12), TS (4.6.7.12): It has the natural meaning of ‘unborn' or the life-soul which leads the life-force to the higher worlds. S renders it as the goat which is slaughtered first before the killing of horse. It does not make much sense to read S stating, “the (dead) goat leads the (slaughtered) horse to heaven''.

*shamita:* Occurring in (RV 1.162.9) and *shamitara* in RV (1.162.10) are rendered as ‘slaughter'. *'shamita*' in RV (10.110.10) is rendered as God or fire by S. *'shamita*' is translated by SA as the achiever of works. This meaning is used by S in RV (3.4.10) as, ‘one who polishes or improves'. *'shamita*' can also mean ‘to calm' or ‘to quicken'; to translate this word as ‘slaughtering' is really far-fetched.

See also the comparison of the translations of TS (4.6.9.2).
Some mantras in the two suktas can be understood as referring to the animal horse. For example (1.162.7) may refer to the fatigue of the horse and the pain

caused by the heel or whip. However there is no support in RV mantras for killing of the horse. The horse was set free after the worship.

The idea of letting an animal go free after worship has been mentioned in Brahmana passage TS (5.1.8) as *'paryagnikrta'.*

We reproduce below the translation of the famous *Ashvastomiya* hymn RV (1.163) which is reproduced completely in TS (4.6.7). The hymn has 13 mantras. Not even one of the mantras seems to refer to the four-legged animal. But all of them refer to the life-energy, the prana imaged in various ways.

TS (4.6.7): Ashvastomiya mantras

Born with wings of eagle: RV (1.163.1)

(O Horse), when on being born you first arose from the Sun or from the waters;

With the wings of an eagle and limbs of swift gazelle;

O Arvat, your superb birth is worthy of praise.

Yama gave it: RV (1.163.2)

God Yama (he who controls) gave (men) this Horse, and Trita harnessed it, Indra was the first to mount him;

The Gandharvas grasped its reins;

Vasus fashioned the steed from the Sun (or light of the Sun).

You are Yama: RV (1.163.3)

O Arvan, you are Yama, you are Aditya;

You are Trita in the secret law of your action, by only a little are you distinguished from Soma;

They say that three are your connections to the heaven.

Supreme Birth: RV (1.163.4)

Your bonds in the heaven is three;

Three in the Waters, three in the Oceans;

O Steed, Varuna has told me the place of your Supreme birth.

Bridles of Truth: RV (1.163.5)

O Swift one, these are your haunts for bathing;

Here are the foundation for your conquering hooves;

Here are seen the auspicious bridles of Right action (*rta*);

That protect the rider and the knowledge.

Perceive the soul (the bird): RV (1.163.6)

I perceive with my mind your innermost soul and it protects;

(Your soul) is like a bird from the heaven swooping down;

O bird, I saw your head speeding with wings on dust-free paths, fair and easy to travel, going higher and higher.

Highest form: RV (1.163.7)

Here I see your highest form, move towards the plane of impulsion of Rays;

When a mortal man pleases your taste;

Then most greedily do you consume the growths of earth.

Law of action: RV (1.163.8)

O steed, the chariot and the army follow you;

The Rays follow you, and the happy delight of the maidens follow you;

They who follow your law of action become friendly to you;

The Gods have measured their power following you.

Inferior Indra: RV (1.163.9)

With his Golden horns, feet of steel, with the speed of mind, he was an inferior Indra.

For the enjoyment of offerings came the Gods;

Who first did master the steed.

Hamsa (swan): RV (1.163.10)

With their backs full of impulsion and their middle part well-knit;

The heroic and divine gallopers, speed in companies like swans;

And are eager (to reach) the divine goal.

Body & mind: RV (1.163.11)

O Steed, your body swoops downwards, your thought is like the tempestuous wind;

Your horns are placed in many places, move quickly in the woods (amidst foes).

Discernment: RV (1.163.12)

The place of discernment has neared and is in your mind;

(You are) meditating with the mind and wishing to the reach the Gods.

Its source is the unborn (the life-soul) which leads in front the life-force;

After whom the seers and those that chant walk.

Highest abode: RV (1.163.13)

To his highest abode has the steed come, to his father and his mother;

To-day do you go to the Gods with Supreme joy;

For the giver, disperse all desirable qualities.

Anuvakas: According to the ritualists the anuvakas dealing with Ashvamedha in TS are: (4.6.6) through (4.6.9), (5.2.11-12), (5.5.11) through (5.5.24), (5.6.11) through (5.6.23), (5.7.11) through (5.7.26), (7.1.11) through (7.1.20), (7.2.11) through (7.2.20) and (7.3.11) through (7.3.20), (7.4.12) through (7.4.22) and finally (7.5.11) through (7.5.25). The connection of many of these anuvakas with Ashvamedha is tenuous. Several anuvakas give lists of animals and they are assumed by ritualists to be meant for slaughtering. The text does not say so anywhere.

For an excellent overview of the rite, its logic and its relation to the Sun, the King and Kingdom, see the book "Ashvamedha: The Rite and the Logic'' by Subhash Kak, (MLBD), 2002, pp. 71.

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## Suparna

Suparna means the bird with wide wings or with beautiful wings. The word occurs in more than twenty verses in the TS and also in 35 verses of Rig Veda.

Sri Aurobindo connects the recurring images of the modes of swift movement such as horse, Suparna, the hawk (*shyena*), the swan (*hamsa*) etc., in the following passage:

“Our life is a horse that neighing and galloping bears us onward and upward; its forces are swift-hoofed steeds; the liberated powers of the mind are wide-winging birds; the mental being or this soul is the upsoaring swan or the Falcon (*shyena*) that breaks out from a hundred iron walls and wrests from the jealous guardians of felicity the wine of Soma. Every shining godward Thought that arises from the secret abysses of the heart is a priest and a creator and chants a divine hymn of luminous realization and puissant fulfilment. We seek for the shining gold of truth.'' (SA)

“It is the symbol of soul liberated and upsoaring, at other times of energies so liberated and upsoaring, winging upwards towards the heights of our being, winging widely with a free flight, no longer involved in the ordinary limited movement or labouring gallop of the Life-energy, Horse.'' (SA)

(4.7.13) declares that:

“These are the unaging wings of you, the winged,

The golden-winged bird, mighty, capable of carrying everyone,

You are the consciousness (chit), born of the ocean, power of delight (indu) and discernment (*daksha*),

You are lodged in the seat of highest consciousness and you return.''

The second half of (4.1.10), (verses 14,15), introduces the well-known symbolism of yajna itself as a golden winged bird (*suparna*), whose soul, wings etc., are all specific types of Sama mantras and metres. Recall that yajamana the sacrificer is himself, the yajna. Yajna is asked to travel to the world of light (*suvah*) and alight there.

“You are the wide-winging bird, garutman; your head is the Trivrt (Stoma), your eye is the Gayatra, your soul is stoma, your body is the Vamadeva Saman, your wings are the Brhat and the Rathantara, your tail is the works done as yajna and those to be avoided as opposed to the idea of yajna (*yajna ayajniyam*); your limbs are the metres, your hooves are the masters of knowledge (*dishniya*), your

name is the yajus mantras. You are the wide-winging bird, garutman; you go to the heaven, fly to the world of light (*suvah*)."

Suparna figures prominently in several Rig Vedic mantras. We give quotes both from RV and TS explaining the nature of Suparna.

"Suparna alone pervades the one ocean of existence and comprehends creation; with ripe mind, I see him within. He addresses the Mother and She answers him.'' RV (10.114.4). See also other verses of (10.114).

"The higher regions are lighted up by the happy winged ray of the Sun (*suparna*), profound of sight, powerful and leading (our life) with the felicities of Light''. (RV (1.35.7), (first half)).

"That Sarasvan we call for growth the bird (*vayasam*) divine, beautiful of wings which is the vast (*brhantam*) womb of the waters, which is mighty among the growths of earth (*oshadhi*), giving satisfaction by its showers all round, this Sarasvant we call for protection (or growth).'' (3.1.11.14), RV (1.164.52).

"The dark-coloured steeds, beautiful of wings, clad in the dew, spring up to the heaven; they return here having established their abodes; then the earth is exalted with clarity.'' (3.1.11.19)

"Your flaming rays (Suparna) gather strength with their speed, the dark showerer (Indra) thunders; as the work progresses, the streams of light (consciousness), like water currents, come down drop by drop as though smiling; the clouds roar and the rain comes down.'' TS (3.1.11.21), RV (1.79.2.)

"Seated in it is the shining-winged one (Suparna), honey-making, nested, assigning honey to the deities. On its brink sit seven tawny ones, milking by the self-law the stream of immortality.'' (4.2.9.22)

"You are the winged bird, (you) be seated on the earth; be seated on the ridge of the earth.'' (4.6.5.8)
"Agni, I yoke with glory, with clarity, the bird divine with beautiful wings vast in strength; with that may we fly to the cool place (*vishtapa*) of the source or Sun (*bradhnasya*), ascending the world of light above the highest heaven.'' TS (4.7.13.1)

TS (4.1.10.14), (4.1.10.15) and RV (1.164.46) identify *suparna* with *garutman,* which is translated by Yaska as "the Great Soul' (*mahan-atma*). This identification of *suparna* and *garutman* is the origin of the numerous myths about Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu in the Purana.

In the Purana there is the popular anecdote of the bird Suparna bringing the Soma from the heaven. The root of this anecdote is in several mantras from RV and TS which we will outline briefly here. This anecdote has several variants in the Vedic texts themselves.

RV 10.144, whose rshi is Suparna Tarkshya, has three mantras, verses 3, 4 and 5, dealing with bringing the Soma from the space beyond. Verse 4 addresses Suparna as the son of falcon (*shyena*) and he brings to Indra the Soma from the space beyond our worlds (*paravatah*). Verse 5 gives more details given below.

RV (10.144.5): "To you Indra, *shyena* (Suparna) has brought with his claws (or feet), the Soma which is beautiful (*charu*), and unassailable, with the colour of dawn. The Soma (*andhasa*) is the builder (*manam*) which prolongs strength (*vaya*) and life (*ayu*) which awakens the affinity (*bhanduta*); Indra attained great consciousness and light (*mahas*)'', (verse 6).

A brahmana passage in TS (6.1.6) relates briefly the famous anecdote of Kadru and Suparni. "In a dispute Suparni was defeated. Kadru told Suparni, 'in the third heaven from here is Soma; fetch it and buy your release','' Kadru is this earth, Suparni is yonder Heaven, the descendents of Suparni are the metres. Suparni told her children, the metres, "to fetch the Soma and buy her release'', "For this do parents raise children''. The metres Jagati and Trishtub tried, but were unsuccessful; only Gayatri was successful. Because Gayatri brought down the Soma, it held the forefront in the sacrifice and it is the glorious of the metres.

Aitereya Br. 3.2.5 has a different version: Both the gods and rshis prayed for Soma to be their king in the dyu-heaven; they requested the metres (*chhandamsi*) to fetch the king Soma from the world beyond *svar*. To do this task the metres assumed the form of the bird Suparna and began flying to the world beyond. Among the metres only the metre Gayatri succeeded to bring the Soma as in the TS version of the anecdote. So TS (6.1.6-3,4) describes the Gayatri as the most brilliant among the metres (*tejasvinitama*) even though it is the least in length (*kanishtha*).

See also RV 10.114 for the relation of Suparna to metres.

RV mantras related to Suparna quoted in TS:

1.35.7, 1.79.2, 1.105.1, 1.105.11, 1.164.20-22, 1.164.46,47, 1.164.52, 2.42.2, 4.26.4, 4.43.3, 6.75.11, 8.100.8, 9.48.3, 9.71.9, 9.85.11, 9.86.1, 9.86.24, 9.98.33, 10.28.10, 10.30.2, 10.55.6, 10.73.11, 10.88.19, 10.94.5, 10.114.3-5, 10.123.6, 10.144.4, 10.149.3.

## Creation

Creation: The idea is mentioned in great detail in several anuvakas. There is the correspondence between the creation at the cosmic level and the mode of manifestation of the cosmic powers in an individual. Some references are:

(i) (4.1.8), which contains the famous Hiranyagarbha Sukta, RV (10.121); (ii) (4.3.10): "17 steps in the Creation of Universe'. (iii) (5.3.6.1): 14 steps in creation: Aditya, dharma, heaven, midworld, earth, the day, the night, Vasus, Rudras, Adityas, Pitrs, offspring, Ray-Cows and plants, (iv) TS (4.6.2).

The anuvaka TS (4.6.2) reproduces many mantras from the two famous creation hymns of RV namely (10.81), and (10.82) associated with rshi Vishvakarman. (4.3.2.5) mentions that this rshi is associated with thought. (4.3.2.2) mentions that the deity Vishvakarman, the All-worker whose power is manas or mind (or thought). However the mantras are ordered differently in TS. It gives an excellent overview of the manifestation of the cosmic powers or Gods both in Cosmos and humans. We reproduce the translation of all the seventeen mantras including the two which are not in RV.

4.6.2: Manifestation of the Gods in the universe and in us:

Entered all: RV (10.81.1)

Offering all these worlds in oblation, the seer and our father is seated as the invoker;

Seeking the riches with the power of aspiration;

(Later) he himself entered into all the manifested beings while shrouding in mystery his Supreme form.

Comprehensive mind: RV (10.82.2)

Vishvakarman is of comprehensive mind;

He is the Disposer, the Ordainer, and the highest Seer;

All the offerings and impulsion rejoice in him;

Where, they say, that the One (*eka*) is there, beyond the seven seers.

[The offerings are the self-offerings of the aspirants. They rejoice since they will be divinized by Vishvakarman.]

Assigns the Names: RV (10.82.3) (v)

He who is our father, our originator, the ordainer.

Who manifested us from primeval existence, who alone assigns their names to the Gods;

To him other beings come questioning (for knowledge).

Strength and light: RV (10.82.4)

Him the seers completely worship with offerings and with elaborate praise like the ancient singers;

He fashioned both the beings of strength and the beings of light in the expanse of middle world.

Who find him not: RV (10.82.7)

You shall not find him (*vishvakarman*) who created this world;

Another principle shall be betwixt you (hence you shall not find him);

Enveloped in the mist of ignorance and with useless talk, the singers reciting mantras for satisfying desires move about enjoying life.

What is that: RV (10.82.5)

What is that which is beyond the heaven, beyond this earth, which is beyond the Gods, which is hidden from the asuras, which the waters bore, in the beginning, the secret embryo.

With which all the Gods were established together?

ONE: RV (10.82.6)

The waters first bore this embryo;

Where all the Gods contemplated together;

The ONE is established in the centre of the Unborn.

On this ONE all the created things depend.

Vishvakarman Vishvakarman, the God, was first born;

Second was the Gandharva;

Third the father, the originator of the growths of earth;

In many a place in the waters did he deposit the child.

Originated the worlds: RV (10.82.1)

The father of vision, wise in spirit;

Originated these two worlds, rich in light, which bow to him in a spirit of surrender;

When the ancient boundaries were made firm;

Then did heaven and earth became extended.

Eyes and ears on all sides: RV (10.81.3)

With eyes on every side, with a face on every side;

With hands on every side, with feet on every side;

He, the sole God, creates heaven and earth and welds them together with arms and with wings.

Questions: RV (10.81.2)

What was the basis or primal matter?

When was the beginning?

How was it done?

From which the Designer of all things, beholding all fashioned the Earth and shaped the glory of the Heaven?

Questions: RV (10.81.4)

What was the wood, and what the tree, from which they formed the heaven and earth secretly?

O you wise ones, ponder; inquire with your minds?

Offer your body in yajna: RV (10.81.5)

Your highest abode, lowest abode, and the midmost abodes are here, O Vishvakarman;

During the offering do you teach your comrades (about your abodes), O Lord of self-law?

Rejoicing, do you yourself offer your body in sacrifice, (thus enhancing its vigour)?

Close to us: RV (10.81.7)

(We invoke) the lord of speech, Vishvakarman, for the increase of plenitude;

Let us invoke him this day and yoke our minds to him;

May he who is close to us delight in our offerings;

May he (grant) us blessing, all-sided happiness and protection, his work is perfection.

Impel us to Light: RV (10.81.6)

O Vishvakarman, waxing great with the oblation, you offer in sacrifice your own body rejoicing;

Let the others around wander here and there;

May the Lord impel us towards the light.

O Vishvakarman, with the strengthening oblation, you did make Indra, the protector, free from scathe.

To him all the ancient people bowed in homage;

He, the forceful one is invoked in many ways.

Designer of all Homage to the lord who manifests the knowledge in streams and ocean to the lord of all the streams, homage!

Through all the days (continue) to offer to the Designer of all (*vishvakarman*), the immortal offering.

## Chhandas and Stomas

Every *rk* mantra is expressed through a chhandas. Popularly chhandas is translated as metre, such as Gayatri, Anushtubh, etc.; the type of metre is said to be determined by the number of syllables. For instance a mantra in Gayatri metre should have 24 syllables; however the rule is not rigid, there are mantras in Gayatri with 22-25 syllables. Note that chhandas is associated only with Vedic mantras. The metres of verses of poetry in classical Sanskrit are said to be *vrtta.*

However when a rk mantra is recited, an injunction is that the names of rshi, devata and chhandas have to be recited. Omitting any of these is regarded as sacrilege (*papiyan*). One can easily understand the importance given to the reciting of the names of the rshi and the Devata. But why is the chhandas singled out for this special attention? This question has not received any consideration.

Most of the mantras in RV are in 7 chhandas namely Gayatri (24), Anushtubh (32), Pangktih (40), Jagati (48), Ushnih (28), Brhati (36) and Trishtup (44), the number in parenthesis indicating the number of syllables.

The remaining are in remaining 10 chhandas namely atijagati (52), atishakvari (60), atyashtih (68), atidhrtih (76), ekapada (10), shakvari (56), ashtih (64), dhrtih (72), dvipada (20) and pragatha.

However TS has its own ideas on Chhandas. TS (1.7.11) mentions chhandas ranging from one to seventeen aksharas. TS (4.3.7) mentions the following metres many of which have no association with any known mantra or with a number of aksharas such as “ma, prama, pratima, asrivi, prthivi, antariksha, dyauh, samah, nakshatrani, manah, vak, krshi, hiranya, gauh, aja, ashva.''

There are similar statements in several places of TS.

To understand these ideas, we should move away from the simplistic definition of chhandas in terms of the number of syllables. Sri Aurobindo translates *'chhandas*' as ‘the poetic measure of the sacred mantras'.

It may be recalled from the essay Suparna that various chhandas assume the form of birds and recover the Soma, the Delight of Existence from the Supreme place. Again TS (4.3.2) mentions that the rshi Vasishtha is born from the Rathantara saman, Vishvamitra from the Vairupa, the rshi Vishvakarma from the Shakvara and Raivata Saman etc.

TS (4.3.8) has a long list of stomas and their functions. According to Sri Aurobindo, stoma is a hymn of praise and God-affirmation.

Note that in the symbolic construction of the symbolic fire-altar mentioned in Kanda 4, chhandas plays an important role. One of the types of bricks used in the physical altar is called chhandas bricks. This is discussed in TS (5.3.8). This section has its own type of symbolism.

There are many anuvakas in Kandas 3, 4 and 5 dealing with chhandas, stotra, saman, uktha, stoma and the deities. Some relevant ones are TS (3.1.2), (3.1.7), (3.5.3), (3.5.10), (4.1.5), (4.1.6), (4.3.7), (4.3.8), (5.2.1), (5.3.8) etc.

The following quotation from Sri Aurobindo on the creative power of mantra is relevant.

"In the system of the Mystics, which has partially survived in the schools of Indian Yoga, the Word is a power, the Word creates. For all creation is expression, everything exists already in the secret abode of the Infinite, *guhahitam*, and has only to be brought out here in apparent form by the active consciousness. Certain schools of Vedic thought even suppose the worlds to have been created by the goddess Word and sound as first etheric vibration to have preceded formation. In the Veda itself there are passages which treat the poetic measures of the sacred mantras, -- *anushtubh, trishtubh, jagati, gayatri,* -- as symbolic of the rhythms in which the universal movement of things is cast.''

"By expression then we create and men are even said to create the gods in themselves by the mantra. Again, that which we have created in our consciousness by the Word, we can fix there by the Word to become part of ourselves and effective not only in our inner life but upon the outer physical world. By expression we form, by affirmation we establish. As a power of expression the word is termed *gih*, or *vacas*; as a power of affirmation, *stoma*. In either aspect it is named *manma* or *mantra*, expression of thought in mind, and *brahman*, expression of the heart or the soul, -- for this seems to have been the earlier sense of the word *brahman*, afterwards applied to the Supreme Soul or universal Being.''

## Notes on 72 topics in the TS

The Taittiriya Samhita has information about a variety of topics pertaining to the philosophy, symbolism, the popular beliefs of the ancients not to be found elsewhere. For instance the concept of the yugas or aeons, the list of seasons and months, the list of birth-asterisms (nakshatras) find their first appearance only in the TS. By declaring and popularising the idea that TS deals only with rituals, the traditionalists have done a great disservice to TS and have prevented a variety of information from the reach of the public.

For helping the reader to become aware of the treasures in TS this brief list of topics has been prepared along with a brief essay on each topic and the references to the relevant anuvakas of TS for more information. The index to Part III gives all the relevant mantras on each topic. The 72 topics are divided into six categories namely -- Topics of Common Interest, Deities, Mantras, Psychology and Philosophy, Symbolism and finally the Study of Some Important Words in TS. The list of topics in each group is given below.

### Topics of Common Interest

**C1. rshis:** rshis are not ordinary human beings or even intellectuals. They have attained great heights in their spiritual pursuits. The following mantra in RV (10.130.7) (also in SYV (34.49)) represents the work of the seven sages very well:

“contemplating and chanting together, doing their work with appropriate rhythms (*saha chhandasa*) the seven sages love one another; they have attained divinity; following the paths of the ancient sages they progress continuously like a charioteer with the reins in his hands''.

The quarrels between the rshis are mentioned only in the Purana and not in the Veda.

TS (4.3.2) mentions the five rshis namely Vasishtha, Bharadvaja, Vishvamitra, Jamadagni and Vishvakarma; RV (10.137) mentions seven rshis: Bharadvaja, Kashyapa, Gotama, Atri, Vishvamitra and Vasishtha. During Sandhya worship, one repeats the names of seven rshis. The list varies from gotra to gotra. One version is: Atri, Bhrgu, Kutsa, Vasishtha, Gotama, Kashyapa, Angirasa. (4.3.3) mentions five rshis Sanaga, Sanatana, Ahabuna, Pratna, Suparna. The Vishvakarma Brahmins who build temples and sculpt the forms of deities trace their lineage to these five rshis.

**C2. Yugas:** The five yugas are mentioned by name in (4.3.3). Of these, names of two of them are not well known.

**C3. Nakshatras:** The names of 27 asterisms are mentioned in (4.4.10) along with their deities.

**C4. Twelve Months and six Seasons:** Six seasons and twelve months are in (4.4.11).

**C5. Wealth and castes:** (4.3.3) mentions five types of wealth. The first three are the wealth associated with *brahma*, that associated with *kshatra*, that associated with *vaishya*. It associates Vaishyas with the rainy season, during which the agriculturists are busy creating wealth. Then it has two different types of wealth. Pushti (nourishment) and Varchas. Note that (4.3.10) mentions in connection with creation that, "Shudra and Arya were created''. Note the order of creation. Commentator S modifies it and says "it is Vaishya and Shudra'. TS (5.7.6) states; "Give brilliance (*rucham*) to Brahmana, brilliance to princes, brilliance to Vaishyas and Shudras'. There is no question of Shudra being regarded as inferior. The rigid caste system came into existence several thousands years later. The complimentary nature of the brahma-power and kshatra-power is in 5.1.10 and 5.2.4. See also (5.4.1) and (5.4.7).

**C6. five:** TS (4.3.3) emphasizes the qualities in cosmos characterised by the number five. There are five rshis, five yugas, five (main) mantras, five seasons etc., which are represented in table (4.3.3); similarly TS (4.3.11.5) declares, "the creator manifested the (world) by five deities, then he produced the sisters of usha, the dawn, five by five''. Recall that Taittiriya Upanishad characterises the five states of consciousness, "*anna* (matter), *prana* (life-force), *mana* (mind), *mahas* (supramental light) and *Ananda* (bliss)'.

See also the topic P7, "Seven''.

**C7. Animal sacrifice:** It is recognised by most persons that animal sacrifice symbolises the ending of the base instincts and cravings in our lives. We accept that the practice of killing animals as a part of the worship was prevalent according to some schools of Tantra.

The main question for us is, "Do the mantras of the four Veda Samhitas support the killing of animals as part of the yajna-rite?'. If one reads uncritically the commentary of Sayana or the translation of the Taittiriya Samhita by Keith, one gets the impression that animal sacrifice is a prominent aspect of the Taittiriya Samhita.

One of the popular yajnas is the Soma Yaga discussed in the Prapathakas TS (1.2 - 1.4). In volume 1 of this series, we have shown by discussing all mantras

of TS (1.2) - TS (1.4) that Sayana conveys the possibility of animal sacrifice by arbitrarily assigning ritualistic meanings to words which naturally do not have those meanings.

The same thing is true for the Ashvamedha Yajna also. In the entire Rig Veda, only two suktas RV (1.162) and RV (163) deal with the praise of the steed or life energy. All these mantras are reproduced in TS (4.6.7) - TS (4.6.9). We request the reader to read the translations of these mantras and also the essay, "Ashvamedha' in Part I. We have established that the mantras of Rig Veda or Taittiriya Samhita do not endorse the ritual killing of the horse. The belief in non-violence among the rshis is also clear from the fact that they regard even the digging of the earth as cruel, (TS (5.1.5)).

**C8. Wish-yielding cow:** This cow is famous in the Purana. The earliest reference is in TS (5.7.2) and (4.4.11.11.

**C9. The wrath of Rudra:** The Vedas proclaim the gods to be loving and considerate to all human beings. Hence the epithet 'wrath' to Rudra who is regarded as one of the important deities appears inconsistent with the phrase 'all-loving'. A deeper look gives a deeper Truth of Veda. Rudra-Shiva is the force of evolution. He applies pressure on humans for their persistent progress. But many human beings under the control of the six inner foes (lust, anger, greed, delusion, arrogance, jealousy) actively oppose Shiva's goals of allround progress. These persons, unconsciously, become allied with the forces of falsehond under some euphemism such as, 'preserving the tradition'; some of them are steeped in laziness. The wrath of Rudra is his reaction to such actions. Note that "wrath' is associated with Vishnu also as in RV (1.154.2), "he is like a terrible lion''. The seeker realises his mistake and prays for Rudra's grace as mentioned in TS (3.4.11.8) (RV (1.114.8)) and others. Also the first line of RV (1.114.8) has the phrase, "*ma nastoke*' which is incorrectly rendered as, "harm not our children'. The correct translation is "may no harm touch our children'. The harm comes from our carelessness and the hostile forces and not from Rudra or other gods. It is silly to believe that Rudra harms children for the mistakes of their parents.

The popular idea that "the Gods punish persons who make mistakes in the performance of rites' has no basis in the Veda. Mistakes occur in the performance of rites because of carelessness and the ignorance of the deeper ideas behind the rite. Such persons exhibit the same qualities of carelessness and ignorance in their other activities; the resulting untoward results cannot be ascribed to the God. Hence a common prayer in the Veda is "make us become more and more aware of ourselves and of our actions'.

## Deities

**D1. Agni:** He is the most important, the most universal of the Vedic Gods. (More than a fourth of the mantras in TS are addressed to Agni). In the physical world, he is the general devourer and enjoyer. He is also the purifier.

He is equally the will in Prana, the dynamic Life-energy. Our passions and absence emotions are the smoke of Agni's burning.

If he is the Will in our nervous being and purifies it by action, he is also the Will in the mind and clarifies it by aspiration when he enters the intellect, he is drawing near to his divine birth place and home. He leads the thoughts towards effective power, he leads the active energies towards Light. (SA)

TS (3.5.11) quotes the 3 RV mantras stating that the sage Dadhyang Atharvan churned out Agni from the lotus in the head.

TS (4.1.9.1) details the psychological powers of Agni. (4.1.4) declares metres as garments of Agni.

The rk mantras in TS addressed to agni are listed in the last anuvaka of all the 7 Prapathakas and other Anuvakas. See also the introduction to (4.1.7) on the Samidheni mantras. (4.2.3.13) clearly states that "gods kindle Agni'. Clearly Agni is not merely the physical fire. See the index for the titles of all the Agni mantras.

**D2. Sarasvati:** She is the goddess of inspiration. (4.1.11) has two of her well-known mantras RV (1.3.11), RV (6.49.7). The mantra RV (6.61.4) is in (1.8.22) in volume 1. See the index for Part (iii).

**D3. Vishnu:** See the introduction to TS (4.5) for the nature of Vishnu and his relation to Brahma and Rudra-Shiva. Vishnu mantras are in (4.2.9), (1.3.6), (1.2.13) and other places.

**D4. Rudra-Shiva:** See (4.5). (4.5.10) contains verses from RV (1.114).

**D5. Savitr:** See the introduction to (4.1.1) and also (4.1.10.12).

**D6. Yama:** He is mentioned as the controller in several mantras in TS. He is not identified as the god of death in Veda. Also see (4.6.7.2), (4.6.7.3), RV (1.163.33) “God Yama gave men the Horse'', "you are Yama'. In (5.2.3) Yama is regarded as the overlord of earth. See also 3.3.8. Note that Ashvins are said to have removed death from the place of yagna in TS (5.1.8).

**D7. Nirrti:** In the Veda she is the Goddess or power of adversity or power of bad-luck. Nirrti literally means the hidden (*ni*) truth (rta), i.e., effects hidden

from our physical eyes. Hence she is treated with respect or homage, see (4.2.5.7), (4.2.5.10), (4.2.5.11).

**D8. Aditi:** She is the goddess of infinity. "May Aditi blissful with luminous speech (svarvachi), with the speech from the silence in the head (*anahata shirshani*) accept and take delight in the soma', (TS (3.2.5.7)).

"I proclaim the birth of the Word, Aditi by name, who has entered and pervaded all this world" (TS (1.7.7.4);).

Diti and Aditi are the rival wives in the Purana. But the symbolism of their rivalry is brought out in TS (5.5.4.9) (RV (4.2.11)). Diti signifies the finite and the multiplicity. Aditi signifies the infinite and knowledge or oneness. Both Diti and Aditi are needed for our spiritual progress. The verse declares, "lavish on us the finite (diti) and guard for us the infinite (aditi)'.

See also (4.2.9.1,2), (4.4.9.1) to (4.4.9.3), (1.5.3.1), (1.5.11.18, 20), (5.5.4) and others given in index.

**D9. Vastoshpati:** Popularly he is the Vastu-Purusha. He is the protector of both the journey and the house; see TS (3.4.10) and others.

**D10. Usha:** Successive dawns and their functions are in (4.3.11). Note the two births of Usha.

**D11. Goddesses:** There is an impression that goddesses play a minor role in the Veda. The impression is created by the count of the mantras dedicated to the Gods and Goddesses.

Veda subscribes to the Purusha-Prakrti dualism. Each God like Agni in the Veda has his own executive power like Agnayi, who is rarely mentioned even though her role is important. In the TS there are several mantras in many places dedicated to the role of Goddesses. Some examples are (4.1.6.8) -- (4.1.6.12), (4.1.9.8), (4.1.9.14), (4.1.9.15). There are many mantras for the major goddess such as Sarasvati, Usha, Aditi.

Krittika Goddesses: (4.4.5.2)

Aditi: (4.4.12.12-14), (4.6.8), RV (6.75.12), (3.2.5); (See also D8)

Anumati: (4.4.12.17-18), (4.7.15.15-16)

Anumati, Raka, Kuhu: (3.3.11)

Sinivali, Anumati, Raka, Kuhu: (3.4.9)

Spouse of Brahmanaspati: (3.5.5)

**D12. Nila Sukta or Vishnu Patni:** It consists of the two verses (4.4.12.12,13).

**D13. Soma:** He is the deity of the delight of existence, also he is the lord of all the woods *Vanaspati, Vana* meaning both wood and delight. See RV (1.91) and the mantra RV (9.96.6) in (3.4.11), RV (9.96.11) in (2.6.12).

Suparna, the divine bird, is said to bring down the divine Soma, represented as the nectar of immortality, from the heaven *svar*. See the latter half of the essay entitled Suparna in Part I of this book.

TS (3.2.8) declares, "Soma is generated for the entire world'. Soma is regarded as the king of the knowers of the word (*brahma*).

**D14. Indra:** In the Veda, Indra is the Lord of the divine mind. Many mantras from the Rig Veda are reproduced here. TS (3.5.2) states that among the seers only Vasishtha could see Indra. Hence the sage Vasishtha is widely respected. TS (3.3.7) declares yajna as the sacrificial body of Indra. TS (4.4.8) deals with *Indra-tanu*, the aspects of yajna made by the power of Indra. They are called as *Indra-tanu* bricks by ritualists. TS (4.4.8) describes these aspects in some detail.

**D15. Number of Gods:** In the Veda the gods do the yajna. (3.3.8) states that the seer, hearer and reciter of the hymns in the yajna are Gods. The Gods are different powers of the One. Viewed from different points of view, we get different numbers. TS (4.4.12) mentions ten Gods and Goddesses namely: Agni, Indra, Vishvedevas (All-Gods), Mitra-Varuna, Brhaspati, Savitr, Aditi, Vaishvanara, Anumati and Ka or Prajapati. TS (4.7.15) has a similar list. The number 33 appears in several places of TS and also in Brh.U. The number is quoted as 21 in TS (5.1.10) detailed as twelve months, five seasons, the three worlds and the Sun.

**D16. Prajapati:** He is the originator of all beings. He is hymned in RV (10.121) (TS (4.1.8)) where he is called as *kah*, the god to whom all offerings are given. TS (3.2.4) regards him as the yajna. TS (3.4.3) and (3.5.9) declares that all deities are Prajapati. He is regarded also as the life-energy or horse in (5.1.7) (Ashvamedha yajna). Even though he creates various animals, all his creatures are said to move away from him according to TS (5.7.10) and other verses.

In TS (5.6.10) he is said to arrange the fire in the bird-shaped altar using the seasons and persons of five groups. TS (3.3.5) states Prajapati created the past and future with the aid of the Viraj (metre). (3.3.7) states Prajapati created the gods, asuras and the sacrifice. (5.6.1.1) mentions the birth of Kashyapa Prajapati from the Primeval Waters.

## Mantras

**M1. Gayatri:** The famous mantra, revealed to rshi Vishvamitra, RV (3.62.10), is in TS (4.1.11.7); it is also in (1.5.6) (Volume 1).

**M2. Bhur Bhuvah Suvah:** This famous mantra appears in (5.5.5.9). This phrase preceded by Om is used along with the Gayatri mantra. Its meaning is explained in Tai. U. (1-5). The three represent the three planes of matter, life-energy and mind; Tai.U. adds the fourth Vyahrti namely *"mahas'* or *"vijnana'* or super-mind. This quartet is given four different interpretations: (i) this world, midworld, other world, aditya (ii) Agni, Vayu, Sun (aditya), Chandrama, (iii) rk, sama, yajus, brahma, (iv) prana, apana, vyana, annam. For explanation of (iv), see prana.

**M3. Sandhya Mantras:** Some rk mantras RV (3.59.1,2,4,6) used in Sandhya worship are in (3.4.11). They are addressed to the God Mitra and God Varuna. The famous mantra to God Savitr in RV (1.35.2) (*a krshnena rajasa...*) is in (3.4.11).

**M4. Waters or Divine Energies:** Discussed in (4.1.5) or (5.6.1) which have the famous RV mantras RV (10.9.1) - RV (10.9.3). (1.7.7) and (1.4.45) have the famous water-mantras from RV (1.23).

Also references to the ocean above (super conscient) and the ocean below (inconscient) appear in (4.2.4.6), RV (3.22.3). See also the index.

**M5. Blessing mantra:** *"shatamanam.....'* is mentioned in TS (4.4.9) along with the clarification of hundred syllables *"shatakshara'* in it.

**M6. Hamsa mantra (perfection):** This famous verse in TS (4.2.1), RV (4.40.5) is also in Katha U. (5.2). *hamsa* is derived from *ahamsah* so that the individual (*aham*) and the Supreme One (*sah*) are one, i.e., the supreme reality simultaneously pervades everything in this universe. *vasu* is *sutra-atman* connecting the individual to the Supreme One (Shankara). For BB *hamsa* has the 3 meanings of soul, sun and chariot. For ritualists *atithi* is the Soma juice which is stored in the pot (*durona*). All the words having the ritualist connotations like *vedi* (altar), *hotr* (invoker) have their correspondences in our subtle body.

**M7: Svaha:** su + a + ha: auspicious, complete, offering (*hanam*). I offer completely; nothing is mine (na mama).

**M8. Medha mantras:** Medha is that which bears dhi; intelligence. See TS (3.3.1).

## Psychology and Philosophy

**P1. The One and the Many:** Veda has a harmonious conception of the One and the Many. It mentions the concept of the One which encompasses everything, [RV (1.164.46) (*ekam sat*), RV (10.114.5) (*ekam santam*)]. However all the diverse things in this universe have come out of this One; they are different aspects of this One. In both the verses quoted above, the One is linked with Suparna, the dynamic aspect of creation.

The different Gods are all aspects of the One. They are as real as the One. It is the gods who perform the yajna, it is the gods who do all the work as indicated in mantra TS (1.1.6) "*ashvinau bahubhyom*' and others.

Several mantras such as (3.5.5) mention the identification with all beings.

**P2. Concept of Supreme or That Beyond manifestation:** TS (3.3.6) mentions that which is Supreme (*para*), the supremacy of the Supreme (*paratvam*), that which is beyond the range of outward activities or rites. This anuvaka mentions, "how to attain that which cannot be won by yajna'. See also (4.6.2.5), (RV (10.82.7)), which declares: "you shall not find him (Vishvakarman) who created this world. Another principle shall be between you and him; enveloped in the mist of ignorance and with useless talk the singers recite mantras for satisfying desires."

**P3. Concept of Truth in movement (*rtam*):** The distinction between *satyam* (Truth in being) and *rtam* (Truth in movement or Right action) is important. *rtam* is Right action. See (3.3.5) and (4.1.4.10).

**P4. Existence and Nonexistence:** (*sat, asat*) The concept is discussed under the heading Creation. Also interesting is the mantra *"brahma jajnanam...'* (4.2.8.4), (5.2.7.1,2). See also P2 and (3.5.8).

**P5. Madhu Vidya or the Doctrine of Delight:** (4.2.9) reproduces the famous RV verses (1.90.6)-(1.90.8) detailing the doctrine of honey or delight which has been developed in the Brh.U. TS (3.1.8), RV (10.17.11) mentions about the power of a drop of bliss, which wanders in the third plane. (5.1.4) and (5.6.6) mention the anecdote of Dadhyan Atharvan and the doctrine of delight.

**P6. Churning of the lotus in the head:** (3.5.11) quotes RV (6.16.13) declaring "The sage Atharvan churned Agni from the Lotus of the head of every

chanting sage.'' TS quotes several mantras from the same sukta (6.16) of rshi Bharadvaja.

**P7. Seven:** RV refers in many places to the seven planes or states of consciousness. They are the three lower planes of matter, life, mind (*bhur, bhuvah, svar*), the corresponding three upper planes of *sat-chit-ananda* [or *jana* (delight, ananda), *tapa* (consciousness-force, *chit*) and *satya* (existence or sat)] and the link world, *mahas* or *vijnana* which links the three triples.

TS (1.5.3.8), addressed to Agni, states "seven are your fuels, seven are your tongues; seven seers, seven dear abodes (or planes), seven invokers, sevenfold worship (yajna) is offered to you; you fill the seven primal sources with Light''. A similar verse is in TS (5.4.7). TS (5.1.7) speaks of seven Pranas. See (4.6.2.2); some references are: sapta vani RV (1.164, 24); sapta tantra, RV (1.164.5); sapta rshi RV (10.137). See also (4.6.5.14) and the topic C6 "five'' in this section 12.

**P8. Healing thoughts and plants: see** (4.2.6).

**P9. Subhashitas or Maxims:** Many of them are in TS. Some are: 'Do not afraid, you will not die.' (4.1.9.8); 'harsh speech' (3.4.8); 'one hates, one loves' (4.2.3.14); 'what is to be is greater than what has been' (5.1.9).

**P10. Subtle body development:** It is acknowledged that the subtle body need to be developed for deeper control of the body and the development of our higher and inner faculties. The entire Kanda 4, particularly (4.1) through (4.4), offer many hints.

**P11. Ascent and descent:** These acts have several meanings in the Veda; ascent (*arohana*) means a call or a prayer to the divine; descent (*avarohana*) means the response of the divine to the call. Their meaning in the breathing and control of prana is hinted elsewhere. See (4.6.3.14).

**P12. Prana, Apana and others:** It is the life-energy mentioned in several mantras of TS. Its full name is Prana-Vayu because it is a form of the cosmic force Vayu. This pranavayu has five primary aspects or functions by the name of Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana, Vyana -- the so called five pranas. TS mentions often the three of them Prana, Apana and Vyana. Note that when we take the air in by breathing, we are taking both the physical air and the subtle prana.

**Prana:** It is the in-breath; it is the agency by which air enters the body; when we breathe in, the diaphragm (*vapa*), mentioned in numerous places in TS (see W7), falls down into the fire in the stomach, *jatharagni*, creating a vacuum and the air rushes in.

**Apana:** It is the out-breath. It is the energy needed for the physical acts like lifting and the expulsion of wastes.

**Samana:** It is the equaliser; samana makes the movements of prana and apana complimentary.

**Vyana:** It is the distributing breath; it distributes the prana energy throughout the body regulating the flow of nutrients etc.

**Udana:** It is the up-breath located near the throat and face enabling swallowing, speech and the maintenance of strength of all muscles.

See (3.5.10), (4.6.1.8), (4.6.9.13), (4.6.3.6), (4.6.3.7), the Ashvamedha mantras in (4.6.7), (4.6.8), (4.6.9) and (5.2.12), (5.3.2), (5.3.7), (5.2.5) and (5.4.5).

**P13. Svadha or self-Law:** It is the self-ordering power of nature. Every entity in nature, be it human, god, animal organization etc., carries within it the subtle law which governs its evolution. Veda has no need for the concept of extra-cosmic God who governs everything as distinct from Himself. The self-law or svadha governs the evolution from inside the entity. See TS (4.2.3), RV (1.147.2) and other mantras. TS ((4.2.3), RV (1.147.2) and other mantras.

**P14. Perfection:** TS declares all-sided perfection as the goal of yajna. It does not limit itself to generalities. It details all the qualities in which the perfection has to be attained. TS (4.7.10) declares:

“may life become perfect by yajna; may life-energy prana, and its operations become perfect by yajna; may eyes become perfect by yajna; may ears become perfect by yajna; may mind become perfect by yajna; may speech become perfect by yajna; may the soul become perfect by yajna; may yajna become perfect by yajna."

Next, the anuvakas TS (4.7.1)-(4.7.9) detail all the qualities that have to be developed and to attain perfection in every one of them. First is the physical body with its limbs, bones, joints, perfect movement, control of decay, subtle bodies. Next, the sustenance of the body, habitation, freedom from illness etc. nourishment for all, appreciating the powers in various types of grains and edibles, appreciating the beauty of nature in sand, stone, clay, roots, herbs, flowers, minerals are mentioned in TS (4.7.1).

Then it gives a long list of qualities, mental and psychological, to be developed for achieving all-sided perfection: Origination, effort, inclination, thought, will-power, speech, fame, renown, revelation, light, world of light, consciousness, learning, mind, discernment, strength, might, force, happiness, pre-eminence, righteous wrath, strength, impetuosity or spontaneity, victorious power,

greatness, breadth, wideness, growth, growing, truth, faith, wealth, power, flaming energy, play, delight, what is born, what is to be born, good words, good deeds, that which is to be known, past, future, auspicious paths and goals in life, affluence, agreement, agreeing, right thinking. In TS (4.7.2) - TS (4.7.5) are mentioned many other qualities or powers which we have to develop for attaining perfection.

## Symbolism

**S1. Bow-arrow:** Clearly bow and arrow mentioned in (4.6.6) are symbolic as in the Upanishads. The entire RV (6.75) in TS (4.6.6) deals with symbolic weapons. Bow (*dhanu*) provides the aim of action, arrow (*shara*) is movement.

Symbolism of bow-arrow as given by Upanishads.

**S2. Plough-furrow-well:** Using this symbolism, (4.2.5) discuss the role of effort in everyday life. It utilises the verses in RV (10.101) mentioning the well (*avata*), plough (*sira*), and furrow (*sita*). Clearly the plough is a symbol representing effort and *avata* symbolises the store of energy obtained by effort. The plough or furrow is not physical since verse (4.2.5.20) states, “the seers yoke the plough''. Plough symbolises the instrument and the associated effort for preparing the body and mind to receive new energies. Yoke (*yupa*) has the usual meaning of being "yoked to the divine forces'. See the six verses (4.2.5.13) - (4.2.5.18). See also (4.7.3).

**S3. Oblation (*havya*):** It signifies always action (*karma*) and each action of mind or body is regarded as a giving of our plenty into the cosmic being and cosmic intention.

**S4. Durva:** Durva is the sacred grass, it symbolises the goddess earth. The famous mantras (4.2.9.3)-(4.2.9.6) are used in rituals even today.

**S5. Dhupa:** It is vibratory movement to ward off the hostiles. It is offered in different metres or chhandas; For instance the *dhupa*-power associated with Rudras is invoked with Trishtub metre. It is incense for the ritualists.

“May the Vasus offer the incense (*dhupa*) to you with the Gayatri metre like the Angiras seers''.

**S6. Graha:** These are the receptacles of Soma; for the ritualists they are cups. When the Soma is released, it has to be shared among all Gods. Each cup has the name of deity associated with it like Marut, Indra etc.

**S7. Four states and two (*dvipada* and *Chatushpada*):** Two-stationed: persons thinking only of the place here and hereafter, or those who are only conscious of mind and matter.

Four-stationed: persons who have developed the four planes or sheaths of consciousness, the physical, vital or *prana*, the mental and the supramental *svar*; ritualists translate *dvipada* as two-footed (humans) and *chatushpada* as four-footed (animals). See also (4.5.10.3).

**S8. Gandharvas and Apsarasas:** In TS (3.4.7), this pair has the function of the Purusha-Prakrti pair appearing in the later Sankhya philosophy. Apsarasa are protrayed as separate shakthis for each god in (4.4.3) without mentioning Gandharva.

Often Gandharva and Apsarasa are paired as in (3.4.7). For instance, "the divine bird Suparna is the Gandharva; his Apsarasas are the metres'', (3.4.7.4); "Prajapati, the mind is the Gandharva; his Apsarasas are the rk and sama mantras called the carrier of the word''. (3.4.7.5).

Gandharva is also mentioned in (4.6.7.2) as connected with the primeval Horse.

Gandharva is one who bears or upholds (*dhar*) the knowledge (*ga*). The Gandharvas and Apsarasas of the Veda have nothing to do with the musicians and the dancers of the Indra's court described in Puranas.

**S9. Cords of Bondage of Varuna:** "Ignorance, this matrix of sin, has in its substantial effect the appearance of a triple cord of limited mind, inefficient life, obscure physical animality, the three ropes with which the rshi Shunahshepah in the parable was bound as a victim to the sacrificial post. The whole result is a struggling or inert poverty of being; it is the meagerness of a mortal undelight and the insufficiency of a being that collapses at every moment towards death. When Varuna, the Mighty, comes and sunders this threefold restraint, we are freed towards riches and immortality. Uplifted, the real man arises to his true kingship in the undivided being. The upper cord flies upward releasing the wings of the Soul into superconscient heights; the middle cord parts both ways and all ways, the constrained life breaking out into a happy breadth of existence; the lower cord collapses downward taking with it the alloy of our physical being to disappear and be dissolved in the stuff of the inconscient. This liberation is the purport of the parable of Shunahshepah and his two great hymns to Varuna''. (SA)

**S10. Gold (*hiranya*):** The common meaning of *hiranya* is gold; to get the deeper meaning, note *hi* stands for *hita,* placed or hidden and *ranya* means delight in many RV verses. Hence *hiranya* is that in which the delight is hidden.

Hence gold has the symbolic colour of the light of the Sun; it is the concrete image of higher Light, the gold of the Truth.

hiranya varna, a common epithet for the Goddess Shri, means one with the hue of gold or delight; hiranya bahu is one whose strength symbolised by his arms is luminous.
hiranmayi: one who is full of delight; one in whom delight (ran) resides (hi) in plenty (mayi). (hi: abiding)
ranyate: RV (5.18.1); ranayanta: RV (4.7.7)
hari : Resplendent, RV (7.10.1), RV (3.3.5); harini has a similar meaning applied to the goddess shri.

**S11. *Aja* (unborn or goat):** The word *aja* occurs in RV and TS in many mantras. It has two distinct meanings namely the 'unborn, the condition of existence before any manifestation' or 'the animal goat'. Ritualists prefer to render *aja* as goat everywhere to emphasize the ritual killing of goat and horse. The translation of 'aja' as 'goat' makes sense only in a few places, whereas the translation of 'aja' as "unborn' is valid everywhere. For instance take RV (10.82.6) or TS (4.6.2.7): "The waters first bore this primeval germ where all the Gods contemplated together; on the navel of the unborn (*aja*), the ONE (ekam) is set''. Clearly 'aja' as goat makes no sense here. Similarly TS (4.2.10.10) states, "From the source (or womb) of the unborn (*aja*) was Agni born''. The same verse states, "aja beheld agni being born''.

*aja* is imaged as the divine mother who establishes the connection between the gods and the supreme Being. Similarly the Ashvamedha mantra RV (1.162.2) or TS (4.6.8.2) states that the unborn soul *aja* leads the imperfect life-force or life-soul with universal form (*vishvarupa*) in our body to the heaven so that it can be energised by the nourisher Pushan and Indra. There is no need to state that the goat is killed and the killed goat leads the slaughtered horse to heaven as ritualists like S. or Keith state in their commentaries. See also (3.4.2.8).

**S12. *Ukha:*** It literally means the other space (*u*: other, *kha*: space). Here it is the subtle space for Agni within us. For ritualists, *ukha* or *okha* is the pan for carrying the physical fire. (4.2.9.1) states that "*ukha* is the concentrated light of the lights''. See also (5.2.9).

**S13. *Swayam-matrnna* (life-energy) bricks:** Their meaning is 'self-perforating bricks' for the ritualist. (5.2.8) explicitly states that *swayam-matrnna* allows the prana to pass through. Recall *matari* is the midworld, home of life-energy. Thus these are connected with life-energies. (5.2.8) states that *swayam-matrnna* reveals the world of heaven. This epithet is valid only for life-energies. See also (5.3.2).

## Word-Study

**W1. *Purisham, purishyasa, purishinam*:** BB translates word *purisham* in TS (1.2.12) as *'puranam prinanam va tvam'*, i.e., 'you who fills us with pleasing things'. Clearly this epithet is appropriate to Agni. Shatapatha Br. (6.4.2.1) defines it as that which fulfills, *'prapurtikaram'*. This sense is valid in many places such as TS (3.2.8.6) *'prajapashavah purisham'*.

Sri Aurobindo translates it as waters in TS (4.2.4.8) and renders *purishyasa* as 'dwelling in waters' which is again valid for Agni. In RV (1.163.1), TS (4.2.8.2), *purishat* means coming from waters.

Sayana in Rig Veda usually renders these words as *udaka* or waters; in TS (4.2) he translates it as *pansu* dust.

It should be noted that the meaning of *purisha* in classical Sanskrit is *mala, amedhya* (urine). See for instance Manu Smriti (5.123). In TS (5.2.3), Keith translates *purisha* as dust, assuming that it is an appropriate epithet for Agni.

*Purisha* has also the meaning of "filler' or the bonding material which fills the gap between the five layers of bricks, which is part of the fire-altar.

**W2. Shamitara:** We consider all the related words *sham, shamitarah, shamituh* and *shami, sharma. Sham* has the basic meaning of peace or calmness in all the veda mantras. S renders *shamita* occurring in RV 1.162.9 or TS (4.6.6.9) and renders *shamitara* occurring in TS (4.6.4.10) as slaughter of the horse. But S renders *shamita* occurring in RV (10.110.10) as God of fire. The meaning given by S for this word in RV (3.4.10) is 'one who polishes or improves'. See also the note in the translation of TS (4.6.6.9). *Shamitara* in TS (4.6.6.10) is rendered by us as 'skilled worker' following Sri Aurobindo who translates *shamita* in RV (10.110.10) as 'achiever of works'. In TS (4.6.6.9) *shamitara* has the meaning of life-force which is viewed as a skilled worker.

Summing *shamita, shamitara* refer to a skilled worker or one who does the work calmly. Translating it as, 'killing' is far fetched.

**W3. *shamyoh:*** It is a key word in Veda. *sham* is usually rendered as well-being or calmness when not engaged in external activity. *yoh* indicates the peace, even when one is involved in activity, i.e. the activity is enveloped by a quietude. See also RV (3.17.3) and TS (3.2.11).

**W4. *go* or *gau:*** In most verses of the Veda, it refers to a ray of knowledge. Hence it is translated as Ray-Cow. In some places only it is the animal cow. All

the words related to *go* in the Veda or in common usage are not related to the animal cow. For instance *goshti* is the place where recitation or discussion takes place. It is not a cow-pen. *gochara* is ‘becoming aware'; it is not ‘cow moving'.

***W5. Pashu:*** Its usual meaning is animal or cow. But from its root *pash* it means one who sees, a sage or seer. We use this meaning in many mantra passages (not Brahmana). We also render it as Ray-Cow in all places.

**W6. *ghrta:*** Ordinary meaning is ghee. However this meaning rarely fits in many mantras. The root *ghr* has the meaning of shining. Since *ghrta* is considered as a product of cow which symbolises rays of knowledge, ghee represents the mental clarities.

In the Veda, *ghrta* is used in connection with thought and mind; the root *ghr* conveys rich and warm brightness. In fixing the meaning of *ghrta*, we have to note that this word and words like *ghrtachi* with *ghrta* as the prefix occur about 200 times in Rig Veda Samhita. Related words like *ghrna, ghrni* occurs about 12 times. That this word *ghrta* is not physical is apparent from the fact that it is used in connection with the mind such as *dhi, manisha,* all connected with thought. The usual translation of *ghrta* as clarified butter is inappropriate in most places. However since butter is the yield of *go* which symbolises Ray of Light, the phrase ‘clarified butter' suggests the correct meaning of ‘the shining yield of the cow of Light'. We translate it as mental clarities everywhere. Note that the phrase *ghrtasya dharah* appearing in RV 4.58.5, 4.58.7, 4.58.10 can only mean ‘streams of clarity', not ‘streams of ghee'. *ghrtachim dhiyam* can only mean, ‘richly bright understanding.' (Adapted from Sri Aurobindo's writings)

**W7. Vapa:** Vapa is the diaphragm in the human body which plays a key role in the breathing process. ‘Dropping the vapa into fire' indicates ‘the dropping the vapa into the stomach-fire (*jathara*) during the in-breath'. See (4.2.7.2), (3.1.4.14), (3.1.5), and the topic P12, prana.

**W8. Praja:** It is offspring for the ritualists. Its deeper meaning is, “birth of a new state of consciousness''. When the rshi pray for "praja”, he is not praying for children, but for the birth of new powers of consciousness in him.

**W9. *bhasma:*** For ritualists, it is the ash; BB translates it as lustres.

**W10. *girishanta, nilagriva:*** These are epithets associated with Shiva-Rudra. See the notes in TS (4.5.1.3) and (4.5.1.9).

**W11. rakshasa:** It is translated as demons. They are the psychological foes like miserliness, selfishness, anger, greed etc., which deter our overall progress both spiritually and materially.

**W12. amavasya:** New moon, dark night; (*ama*: forceful, *vasya*: covered), i.e., the light is completely covered.

## Translations and Commentaries

Our book deals with the spiritual interpretation of the KYV TS. This has not been done before. We have tread the path of Sri Aurobindo (SA). Since KYV TS has a large number of verses from the Rig Veda Samhita, we have given the translations of SA wherever available either from the *"Hymns to the Mystic Fire"* or *"The Secret of the Veda."*

Sri Kapali Sastry in his luminous introduction to his commentary of Rig Veda has discussed extensively both the inner and outer yajna and the relation between the two. Several of the quotes from the Brahmana books are from his books and writings which are available in his Collected Works and also the compilation, "Unveiling the Light in the Veda."

Unlike Rig Veda, the KYV TS has only a few commentaries and fewer translations; we have the commentary of Bhatta Bhaskara Mishra (BB) known as *"jnanayajna"* (who was prior to S) which is brief; we have already referred to the well-known commentary of Sayana Acharya (S), known as *"vedarthaprakash".* The edition [V1] published by Vaidika Samshodhan Mandala (VSM) has the complete text of both the commentaries of S and BB running into 7 books each of about 500 pages. The first kanda alone runs into 2 volumes. The *devanagari* text of TS in this book is based on the VSM edition omitting the ritualistic titles given to the *anuvakas.*

The Kannada translation of the first kanda of Sayana's commentary with excerpts from BB's work and some additional details regarding rituals has been done by Vidvan P.S. Rameshvaravadhani.

The first printed version of TS was brought out by Dr. A. Weber in 1871. The entire KYV TS has been rendered into English by B. Keith published in 1914 [C6]. His work is clearly based on the commentary of S, but he gives his own interpretations in many places. His work gives the details of the mandala-sukta-verse number for every verse of Rig Veda Samhita occurring in KYV TS. S does not do so since he regards the Yajur Veda as the primary Veda, Rig and Sama Veda being auxiliaries. S and his lineage belonged to KYV.

The commentary of S deals extensively with the sacrificial procedures giving numerous quotes from Brahmana books and *shrautasutras* like those of Bodhayana and Apasthamba. He forces each verse to yield a meaning which has some relevance, however remote, for ritual. S does not give the grammar based derivation of the meaning he assigns to the words. BB gives the etymological exegesis of the words. Here and there we see some interesting comments. There are several 'bhashyas' on the four Vedas between the times of Yaska and Sayana, as pointed out by L. Sarup.

Since there is almost fifty percent overlap between KYV TS and SYV (VS) translations of the latter are also useful. S, Mahidhara and Uvvata have written commentaries in the medieval period. Mahidhara and Uvvata commentaries are also ritualistic. There is nothing new one can learn from these commentaries for our KYV study.

Griffith's English translation [C11] follows closely the ritualistic commentary of Mahidhara [V5] rendering every verse in a ritualistic way. He especially focuses on the animal sacrifice.

An important commentary in Samskrt on SYV VS is due to the great scholar, social reformer and resuscitator of ancient culture, Swami Dayananda Sarasvati (SD) (1824-1883). He was the first person in the Indian renaissance of 19th century to declare that Veda Samhitas are books of wisdom, being the revelations of the Supreme Being regarding *dharma,* ethics and mortality. Recall that Raja Ram Mohan Roy, his contemporary, declared that only Upanishads are the books of wisdom and Veda Samhita are devoid of wisdom being merely ritualistic. He does not believe in extended outward rites yajna involving the killing of the animal.

Devi Chand has translated SYV VS into English closely following the commentary of SD. However he gives only a summary translation of each mantra involving 20 to 30 words without indicating the meanings assigned to every phrase or word.

Since SD did not believe in the existence of the cosmic powers like Agni, Indra etc., verses addressed to Indra for instance are translated as prayers to the Supreme Being or as injunctions to the ruler, military chief, learned persons, male and female teachers, male and female students, craftsmen as the case may be. Such a translation starting from a completely different point of view is an excellent counterpoint to the translation stressing the rituals.

For instance, consider some of the verses appearing in the seventh book of TS such as TS (7.5.19). Many of these verses also appear in VS (23.19). Griffith declares that the verses 18-31 of this chapter are obscene, and Keith passes a similar remark for the corresponding verses in TS. Both these translations are based on the Samskrt commentary of Mahidhara who is intensely addicted to rituals, especially with the rituals of the left-hand path of the tantras. TB (3.9) discusses these mantras in great detail from the point of view of symbolism. Obviously there is no obscenity here. DC's translation of these verses based on SD's work does not indicate any obscenity, unless the mention of the word *garbha,* womb is itself an obscenity. DC gives only a summary translation of these verses, like Griffith or Keith, without giving the word-meanings.

The popular author J. Campbell quotes this garbled translation of the TS verse and declares, “he (Deussen) recognised already -- as no Indian seems to have seen--that between the Vedic and Upanishad views the difference is so great that the latter could not possibly have developed out of the former......."

The translation of the *brahmana* parts of TS in this book depends heavily on the commentary of Sayana and the English translation of Keith. For the translation of the mantras of TS, the meanings of the words suggested by S or BB have been useful even when I did not use them.

All the mantra translations taken from Sri Aurobindo end with the notation (SA). Most of them are from his book, “Hymns to the Mystic Fire'', a small number of them from. All the translations of the Rig Vedic verses of ashtaka 1, i.e., mantras from of suktas 1-121 are taken from Kashyap which are based on the Samskrt commentary of Sri Kapali Sastry.

Sri Aurobindo's words on the work of S is very pertinent. “All the vast labour of European erudition has not been able to replace its utility. At every step, we are obliged to differ from it, but at every step we are obliged to use it. It is a necessary springing-board, or a stair that we have to use for entrance, though we must leave it behind if we wish to pass forwards into the penetralia.'' [SA, SV, p. 23].

The spiritual/ psychological interpretation espoused here has received strong support from several eminent traditional scholars such as H.H. Sri Sri Rangapriya Sri pada Sri Srih, author of *ashirvachana,* Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao, the author of the foreword, Dr. V. Kutumba Sastry, Swami Gabhiranandaji, Swami Siddheshwarji and others. Still I am not naive enough to think that all the orthodox pundits will immediately accept the new interpretation. Kuhn, a sociologist of Science, observes that even eminent scientists in the physical sciences do not accept a radically new finding or discovery even when it has massive evidence in its favour. The power of mental inertia is strong. It is only the beginning scientists and research students who embrace the new idea warmly. What is described here is a form of Yoga, the Vedic Yoga. My prayer is that students from the many schools of self-realisation, yoga and alternative medicine will appreciate the Yoga of the Krishna Yajur Veda given here.

## Shukla and Krishna Connection

It has two major recensions, namely Shukla Yajurveda (SYV) Samhita or Vajasaneyi Samhita and the Krishna Yajurveda (KYV) Samhita or Taittiriya Samhita. These two recensions are substantially different from one another. There are also other recensions like the Khataka Samhita, Kapishthala Samhita, and Maitrayani Samhita which are also closer to the Taittiriya Samhita. For textual matters, click references.

The words Krishna and Shukla have many meanings, but the meaning for Krishna is 'mixed' or 'a mixture'; the meaning for Shukla is 'unmixed' or 'plain' or 'white'. What is the mixture? Recall that every one of the four Veda Samhitas has attached to it, one or more Brahmana books. A Brahmana book gives some of the details of the rituals associated with verses in the Yajurveda Samhita or the explanation of the rituals. For instance, Aitareya Brahmana is associated with Rigveda Samhita. However in the Krishna Yajurveda Samhita, the explanatory verses from the associated Brahmana, the Taittiriya Brahmana were inserted into the Yajurveda Samhita text itself presumably as a help for the persons performing the ritual. Hence Krishna Yajurveda Samhita is a mixture of the mantra verses and explanatory Brahmana verses.

This mixing up had far-reaching consequences since some of the champions of the KYV Samhita declared that the sole purpose of the Veda mantras was for rituals and these Veda verses have no other deeper meaning.

Often Krishna Yajurveda is translated as 'black Yajurveda', somehow suggesting that it deals with black magic. Nothing can be farther from truth.

Shukla Yajurveda Samhita has no mixture and its associated Brahmana book is the Shatapatha Brahmana

The bifurcation of the Yajurveda into Shukla and Krishna had far-reaching consequences. There is an anecdote in Vishnu purana (3.5) explaining the bifurcation. The anecdote is symbolic and a synopsis will be given. The person to whom the Shukla Yajurveda or Vajasaneyi Samhita was revealed was Yajnavalkya (Y) who figures prominently in the ancient Upanishads like Chhandogya and the Brhadaranyaka. Y was a student of Vaishampayana. Apparently Y did not like the mixing the mantra verses and the Brahmana verses which tended to dilute the deeper meaning of the Vedic mantras. Hence he literally threw away the knowledge obtained from his teacher and did intense askesis on Surya or Spiritual Sun who revealed to him the Shukla Yajurveda - the yajus uncorrupted by the Brahmana verses. A band of students under a teacher, *tittiri,* preserved the knowledge of Vaishampayana and hence the Krishna Yajurveda is also known as Taittiriya Samhita.

It should be emphasized that it is easy to distinguish the mantras from the inserted parts of the Brahmana texts in the Taittiriya Samhita. The practice of regarding the Vajasaneyi Samhita as the sole Yajurveda Samhita, prevalent in some circles in Northern India, is absurd.